

Education and Encounter after October 7

Implications for German-Israeli Youth Exchange and Dealing with Antisemitism

Toolkit for Facilitators of Youth Exchange Programs



WE ARE CONNECTED.
German-Israeli Youth Exchange
in Support for Israel







IMPRINT

**ConAct – Coordination Center
German-Israeli Youth Exchange**
Altes Rathaus – Markt 26
06886 Lutherstadt Wittenberg
Tel. +49 (0)3491 4202-60
Fax +49 (0)3491 4202-70
info@ConAct-org.de
www.ConAct-org.de

**Israel Youth
Exchange Authority**
HaYasmin 1, Ramat Efal
Israel
Tel. +972 (0)3 6969-390
Fax +972 (0)3 6969-382
ariella@youthex.co.il

**Council of Youth
Movements in Israel**
HaYasmin 1, Ramat Efal
Israel
Tel. +972 (0)3 5354777
Fax +972 (0)3 7369101
info@tni.org.il
eng.tni.org.il



Project coordination: Ilira Aliai | **Production coordination:** Katharina Schubert
Responsible for content according to German press law: Christine Mähler (ConAct)
Editorial team: Ilira Aliai, Tlalit Kitzoni, Falko Kliewe, Shlomit Ronen-Livne, Christine Mähler, Tal Madar, Simon Rumlich, Katharina Schubert, Cyra Sommer, Sabine Troitzsch

Design: ultramarinrot – Büro für Kommunikationsdesign
(Katrín Surberg, www.ultramarinrot.de)

Picture credits: Aviv Abergel Photography (cover, left), George Stevens (p. 35), Ruthe Zuntz (p. 40, 43, 46, pp. 110/111, pp. 114/115). **All other pictures are from ConAct.**

Production: Elbe Druckerei Wittenberg GmbH

Production of videos: Tammy Bar-Shay Photography. Special thanks to all the young protagonists who were available for the interviews.

The following publication is the joint effort of a bilateral working group and of the following organizations committed to German-Israeli youth exchange: **ConAct – Coordination Center German-Israeli Youth Exchange, Council of Youth Movements in Israel and the Israel Youth Exchange Authority.** The toolkit was developed as a component of the initiative **WE ARE CONNECTED. German-Israeli Youth Exchange in Support for Israel.** For more information about the working group and the publishing organizations see pp. 110–113.

Disclaimer: The following publication does not represent the opinion of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. Solely responsible for the content are the authors. The same applies to the digitally available appendices of the toolkit with working materials.

Funded by:



WE ARE CONNECTED.
German-Israeli Youth Exchange
in Support for Israel



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth

Education and Encounter after October 7

**Implications for German-Israeli Youth Exchange
and Dealing with Antisemitism**

Toolkit for Facilitators of Youth Exchange Programs

Table of Contents

I. WE ARE CONNECTED.	
Restarting German-Israeli Youth Exchange after October 7	8
II. How to Use This Toolkit	10
III. Implications for German-Israeli Youth Exchanges after October 7	14

CHAPTER 1

October 7 – A Timeline of Events and Implications for the Israeli & German Society

October 7 and Its Implications for the Israeli Society	22
I. The Terror Attack of October 7 – A Timeline of Events <i>Uriel Kashi</i>	23
II. The Youth of Israel Calls to Bring Them Home Now <i>Roy Shaul</i>	28
III. “On the Edge” – The Civilian Frontline since October 7 <i>Efrat Simenhaus-Shafran</i>	30
IV. We Must Rebuild. But at What Price? <i>George Stevens</i>	34
October 7 and Its Implications for the German Society	38
V. After October 7 – An Overview of Developments in the German Society	39
VI. Bavarian Youth Work after October 7 – Reevaluating Political Education <i>Sabine Klein</i>	42
VII. Creating Space for Understanding and Mutual Respect <i>Bettina Pinzl</i>	45
VIII. The Impact of October 7 on Our Everyday School Life – A Personal Report <i>Martina Kölsch</i>	48

CHAPTER 2

Education and Encounter after October 7 – Educational Activities

Part I – Educational Activities for the Preparation of a German-Israeli Youth Exchange Program 52

- I. When Their Worlds Stopped ... What Happened on October 7 in Israel? 53
- II. How Are You? ... Insights into Life in Israel after October 7 57
- III. The Feeling of Isolation ... Views on Antisemitism in Germany from an Israeli Perspective 61
- IV. Building a Safe Space for Discourse 66
- V. Not Everything Is Antisemitism, but How Can We Tell? 70

Part II – Educational Activities in the Course of a German-Israeli Youth Exchange Program 75

- I. October 7 and Us – Being Young Amidst This War 76
- II. Social Media and the Events of October 7 80
- III. Our Alphabet of Resilience 84
- IV. Commemorating October 7 in a Bilateral Group 89

CHAPTER 3

Further Suggested Material

- I. Testimonies from October 7 96
- II. Mapping October 7 103
- III. Artistic Production after October 7 104
- IV. The Power of Social Media 106
- V. WE ARE CONNECTED. German-Israeli Partnerships in Action 107

Special Thanks – German-Israeli Working Group for the Development of the Toolkit “Education and Encounter after October 7” 110

About Us 112

I. WE ARE CONNECTED.

Restarting German-Israeli Youth Exchange after October 7

- How can we relate to the events of October 7 in Israel?
- How can we get some insight into what exactly happened to the people in the south of Israel who were attacked on that day?
- How can we try to get a sense of what it means to suddenly lose family members, friends, homes, communities?
- How can we find words to talk about the events, to ask questions, to speak the unspeakable, to consciously relate ourselves to what happened?
- How can we shape our awareness regarding the impact of October 7 on life and discourses in Israel, but also in Germany?
- How can we keep on being closely connected in our minds and hearts, taking all this into consideration?
- How can we restart German-Israeli Youth and Professional encounters within this complicated mindset after October 7?

These are the questions filling our minds since October 7. Answers to these questions are challenging, complicated, sad. About 1.200 people in Israel were murdered on that day. About 240 people were taken hostage. About 200.000 people in Israel needed to flee from their homes, were evacuated. Everyone in Israel is affected, the stories of the hostages and of other victims of these unexpected violent attacks by the Terrorist Organization of the Hamas on civilians in the south of Israel have a strong presence since then. Israel is at war in Gaza against the Hamas, being attacked from the Hezbollah in the North at the same time.

The events of October 7 have a profound impact on Israeli society and will undoubtedly become an enduring turning point. Right now it is impossible to say exactly how they will shape the future. Those impossibly difficult events in Israel, and the others still taking place in their wake, have also affected attitudes in German society. In the days and months since October 7 we have seen evidence of support for Israel, but also evidence of hatred, violence and antisemitism in Germany and in the world. We notice sincere desires to express solidarity and listen to what is happening in Israel, alongside complex questions regarding the nature and credibility of the disturbing information and images coming out of the Gaza Strip.

The youth and young adult exchange programs between Israel and Germany are based on historically built bilateral relations and have grown to be a strong network over six decades. The importance of their existence – to Israel and Germany alike – is even greater and more acute than ever. The current period calls for us as educators and exchange leaders to be much more aware of, and alert to the challenges that these meetings now pose.

Out of our own process to restart communication and cooperation after October 7 we developed the wish to share our experience of slowly approaching the events, the personal stories, the sadness and the mourning, the implications and the constant wish to ask questions and make Israeli voices heard in Germany. This is the background and context of creating this toolkit, working in an ongoing and intensive bilateral process of thinking and feeling and acting together.

This toolkit “Education and Encounter after October 7” is based on the ideas and contributions of a bilateral working group consisting of educators and exchange facilitators from Israel and Germany. Together we experienced days of moving encounters and we developed activities, which shall help to find answers to the questions listed above. The purpose of this toolkit is to try and give those who lead encounter programs in Israel and Germany ideas, materials, guidelines and emphases, which shall support a good educational encounter process, both in preparing for and experiencing the meetings, even and especially during these difficult times. The toolkit is being developed and written while the war is still raging in Israel, and many questions regarding its nature and how long it will last are mounting in both the German and the Israeli public. Its relevance is obvious, yet materials and activities may need further development and adjustment to future realities. It will be work in progress. For the moment they shall pave the way for getting together again.

WE ARE CONNECTED. German-Israeli Youth Exchange in Support for Israel. This is the name we have given to our joint initiative for the youth contacts between Germany and Israel in these difficult months. It expresses the frame and the spirit in which our shared activities and those of many exchange cooperations take place. The development of the toolkit is one important component in this ongoing process of shared activities. The **WE ARE CONNECTED.** Initiative encourages German Partner organizations and young people from youth and school exchanges to be in contact with Israeli partners and friends NOW and to show visible signs of connectedness. May this toolkit support all initiatives of encounters to come up soon. May it encourage to continue on our shared way with strong bonds in Education and Youth Exchange.

We pray and hope for the return of all the abductees in peace.
We pray and hope for better days to come soon.

WE ARE CONNECTED.

Christine Mähler	Ilira Aliai	Tal Madar	Ariella Gill
ConAct – Coordination Center		Council of Youth	Israel Youth
German-Israeli Youth Exchange		Movements in Israel	Exchange Authority

II. How to Use This Toolkit

Addressing October 7 in German-Israeli Youth Exchanges

The toolkit “Education and Encounter after October 7” aims to provide facilitators of German-Israeli Youth Exchange programs with guidance and educational resources to effectively address the events of October 7 within an educational context with young people. In addition to finding suitable language to discuss these events, the toolkit encourages facilitators from both countries to engage in bilateral discussions on these topics. The provided material sheds light on the impact of the events on Israeli society and raises awareness of the increasing antisemitism in Germany and worldwide. Last, the toolkit emphasizes the importance of remembering and honoring those affected by the attacks of October 7 and it highlights the continuous effort to strengthen bonds among young people from Germany and Israel amid these challenging times.

On the creation of this toolkit

A working group of German-Israeli educators and youth exchange experts took place on January 22–24, 2024, aimed at bilaterally developing concepts and activities for addressing the aftermath of Hamas’ attack on Israel in an educational context. The working group sessions focused on the following questions:

- ❖ What do the events and implications of October 7 mean for the Israeli and German society?
- ❖ How do we appropriately address these topics in the educational work with young people both in Germany and in Israel?
- ❖ How can we bring the voices and experiences of young people from Israel closer to young people in Germany in these challenging times?

This toolkit has been developed as a result of the collaborative efforts following the intensive exchange during the meeting.

The suggestions, materials and offers in this toolkit are to be understood only as recommendations resulting from the bilateral working group.

Voices of young people from Israel

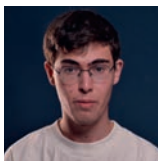
At the heart of the activities in this toolkit are the voices and experiences of young people from Israel. One month after the October 7 attack, the Council of Youth Movements in Israel gathered 14 teenagers and young people to share their emotions, thoughts, and reflections. This is how the video series “Voices of

Young People from Israel” was created. These videos serve as an integral component of the proposed activities, offering valuable insights into the challenges faced by young people in Israel today. They speak of loss, despair, and uncertainty about the future, but also highlight integrity, values, and the important role of youth during challenging times.

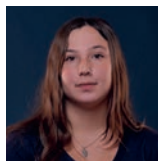
At the time these videos were created, Israeli society was still grappling with the profound shock of the October 7 attack. While the impact of these events remains significant in Israeli society, it is important to recognize that many aspects have evolved since then. Statements made a month after the attack may not hold the same relevance today, although some continue to resonate strongly, emphasizing the enduring implications of these events for young people in the country.



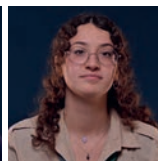
Find the video series “Voices of Young People From Israel”:
kurzelinks.de/videos-toolkit-october7



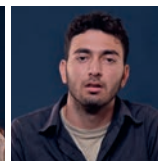
Ron (17)



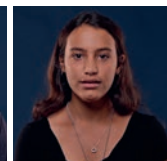
Ella (16)



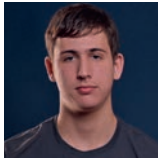
Gal (18)



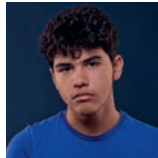
Yehonatan (18)



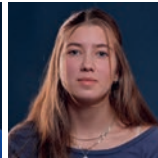
Yuval (16)



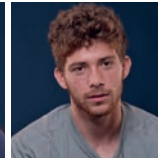
Amit (17)



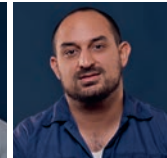
Ido (17)



Neomi (17)



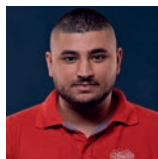
Rom (17)



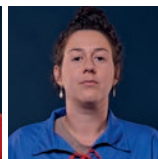
Bar (29)



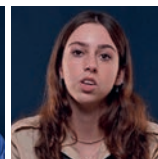
Gaya (19)



Mahmod (20)



Sapir (30)



Tavor (19)

Before conducting any of the activities which include the presentation of a video, it is recommended to print out the **Poster of Profiles “Voices of Young People from Israel”** from the appendix. In this poster, the young participants present themselves, referring to their hobbies and their life motto but also to their dreams and future.

About the structure of the toolkit

This toolkit is divided into three chapters:

Chapter 1 offers an overview of events regarding October 7 and its implications in different spheres of society in Israel but also Germany. This chapter serves for the preparation of facilitators of youth exchange programs and should be consulted before conducting any of the proposed activities.

Chapter 2 offers educational activities for young people regarding October 7 and is divided into two parts:

Part I offers five activities for the preparation of youth exchange programs. Please note that these activities do not replace the usual preparation that is an essential part of any encounter program. Discussions and decision-making processes between facilitators should continue to be based on the pre-existing array of knowledge and experience (See: Practical Guidebook for German-Israeli Youth Exchange: Plan Together – Experience Exchange! www.conact-org.de/praxishandbuch-1).

Given that participants from Germany may not possess extensive knowledge about the developments in Israel, the emphasis of methods in Chapter 2, Part I lies more on the preparation of youngsters from Germany regarding these events. The activities in this chapter aim to offer a comprehensive overview of the events of October 7 (Activity I), provide insights into Israeli society (Activity II) and address the increasing antisemitism through the experiences of young people affected by it (Activity III). Activity IV is intended for use for the preparation of both the German and Israeli group, with a focus on fostering a comfortable and secure environment throughout the exchange program. The last activity in the section of preparation before the encounter is designed to prepare the Israeli group, addressing the topic of Israel-related antisemitism, and providing guidance and examples on how to recognize it.

Part II offers four activities that are designed to help address the events of October 7 together during the encounter. Following discussions among participants about the significance of these events to each participant (Activity I), the youngsters gain skills and knowledge about the importance of responsible consumption of news and social media content, especially regarding the ongoing war and its portrayal in social media channels around the world (Activity II). Acknowledging the significance of resilience in confronting traumatic events, Activity III encourages participants to contemplate the concept of resilience and reflect on their personal experiences of overcoming adversity. The last pages of this chapter are dedicated to the topic of commemorating the victims of October 7. It is suggested to incorporate a shared moment of

remembrance following discussions about the tragic events during the youth exchange, serving as a poignant closing activity.

Last, **Chapter 3** offers a compilation of further useful materials to address the events of October 7 in an educational setting. This chapter features a variety of materials, including survivor testimonies, informative online content, as well as songs, poems, and other artistic creations that emerged after October 7.



IMPORTANT

This toolkit is being written while the war is still raging in Israel and hostages are being held in Hamas captivity for more than five months already. Many questions regarding the nature of the war and how long it will last are mounting in both the German and the Israeli public. Simultaneously, October 7 diminishes in significance in the public discourses in Germany and receives less representation in the news. Facilitators should be mindful that the relevance of some of the recommendations provided in this toolkit must be re-evaluated – according to the reality at the time.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE: This toolkit contains a detailed step-by-step description of all activities. For each activity, there is a digital appendix with the working materials required to carry out the method – worksheets, texts, examples of images and quotations as well as work assignments. The appendix for each activity is provided as a PDF on the **website**



www.conact-org.de/toolkit-october-7 and must be downloaded and printed out before carrying out the activity. On the first page of each activity, there is a QR code and a URL that leads to the respective PDF.

SYMBOLS



Recommended duration for the activity



Explanations and educational tips for implementing the method



Recommended number of participants and age range



Important! It is essential to bear this in mind when carrying out the method.



Materials needed for the activity, such as markers and moderation cards



Further optional material for the implementation of an activity



Reference to the digital attachment for download



Variation of the activity

III. Implications for German-Israeli Youth Exchanges after October 7

Finding a Language about the Events of October 7

The onslaught of Hamas has deeply shaken Israeli society. The violence of these events, extensively recounted, was beyond imagination. The tragic losses from the events of October and the fate of the hostages who are still held in Hamas captivity cause a profound sense of despair and fear for the future of people in Israel.

One of the primary challenges in educational work with young people from both countries is finding a suitable language to address these events when the time comes and the youth encounters resume. It is anticipated that the events of October 7 will feature prominently in discussions among young participants during a youth exchange program. Therefore, facilitators must be mindful of this and ensure that the topic is integrated both into the preparation phase of the exchange program and also addressed appropriately throughout the program itself.

Preparing for a Youth Exchange Program in the Aftermath of October 7

After October 7, the preparation of a youth exchange is more important than ever. To ensure a safe environment for all participants, it is essential to establish beforehand who within the group – whether in Israel or in Germany – is directly affected by the recent events and in what ways. Facilitators should consider what questions and concerns young people may have regarding October 7 and the war with Hamas. Understanding the participants' willingness to discuss their experiences and the questions they feel comfortable answering is vital. How can a safe framework be created that also encourages sharing? Those in charge of a youth exchange need to know this beforehand, plan it together, and raise awareness about it during preparatory meetings in each country.

Good communication with parents before a planned youth exchange to the other country is more important than ever after October 7. Due to the diversity of target groups, regions and exchange formats, this educational toolkit cannot offer any patent remedies. Yet, we wish to emphasize the importance of building a strong, close, and transparent relationship with the exchange coordinator from the other country. We recommend partners to hold digital meetings to discuss questions, share updates about the program, and address any concerns regarding safety issues.

Given that many parents may feel hesitant about letting their children travel to the other country and may have a lot of safety questions, it is important to provide them with reassurance and information. Consider preparing short answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) for parents and inviting former exchange participants to share their firsthand experiences. This not only addresses their concerns but also provides valuable insights into the youth exchange program, helping to alleviate fears and build confidence in the program's safety measures.

Bridging Different Experiences among Participants

In Israel, nearly everyone has a connection to someone whose relatives, friends, or acquaintances fell victim to murder or abduction since October 7. Funerals have become a tragically common experience for many. Since October 7, over 200,000 Israelis have been forced to evacuate their homes within their own country, relocating to what has been designated as a newly established security zone.

Young people in Germany have been following the events of October 7 and the ongoing war on the news and on their social media. However, it is important to acknowledge that the experiences of young people in both countries are very different.

While youngsters in Israel grapple with concerns about their future, their peers in Germany are not necessarily exposed to these kinds of questions. Facilitators need to acknowledge these differences and approach discussions with the necessary sensitivity. We recommend to encourage especially participants from Germany to lend an open ear, empathize with, and understand the perspectives of their peers from Israel. This mutual understanding fosters a more inclusive exchange environment. On the other side, the youngsters from Israel might also acknowledge that young people in Germany may have limited awareness of the situation in Israel. Through well-organized activities during youth exchanges, participants can not only gain insight into each other's current realities but also cultivate empathy and solidarity for all those impacted in Israel.

Addressing Antisemitism and Strengthening Social Media Competencies

Israel and the Middle East conflict often become the center of attention during regional developments or armed conflicts. Anti-Israeli demonstrations often escalate into antisemitic rhetoric and actions. Jews in Germany are repeatedly held responsible for events in Israel and the Middle East and are often verbally or even physically attacked.

Young people in Germany are also impacted by these developments, especially through the consumption of unfiltered images and misinformation on social media. This was made particularly visible in the war resulting after October 7, where the polarizing opinions surrounding the Israel-Hamas war not only created divided fronts but also fueled a surge in antisemitism in Germany and globally.

Educational preparation for German-Israeli encounters includes a focus on addressing antisemitism. This involves learning about its historical roots and the various ways it manifests, as well as strategies for confronting antisemitic expressions or actions when encountered. Now more than ever, facilitators of exchange programs should address the topic of antisemitism, highlighting the new forms of antisemitic expressions that have emerged since October 7. The “Method Compilation for Antisemitism-Sensitive Preparation and Follow-up of German-Israeli Youth Exchange Programs” (sichtbar-handeln.org/methodensammlung) serves as an important educational tool for facilitators from Germany.

Antisemitism was never a particularly important topic in Israel, given that it is the only state where Jewish people are not a minority and flourishing Jewish life is unquestionable there. Yet, people in Israel were strongly affected by the waves of antisemitic expressions that emerged since October 7 and which perpetuate stereotypes of “the Jews” under the guise of criticism of Israel.

Especially after October 7, people in Israel felt abandoned in their pain and grief, and increasingly isolated internationally. For instance, the bitter slogan “Believe all women unless they are Israeli” became prominent after the delayed response of UN Women to address the rape and abuse of Israeli victims by Hamas (search social media for the hashtag #BelievesraeliWomen to find examples).

At this moment in time, it seems fitting to address the topic of antisemitism also in the preparation of exchange programs on the Israeli side. Activity 5 “Not Everything is Antisemitism but How Can We Tell” in this toolkit serves as an introduction to the topic of Israel-related antisemitism for participants from Israel.

While the experiences and perspectives on antisemitism are very different in the two countries, discussions regarding the Middle East conflict and the current war are likely to take place during the youth exchange program. In addition to imparting knowledge about the complexity of this conflict, the group can use the chance to think of the distorted pictures and misconceptions that are particularly visible on social media and strengthen their media competencies together. The activity “Social Media and the Events of October 7” from this toolkit serves as a basis for such a discussion.

Checklist for Facilitators of Youth Exchange Programs after October 7

The suggestions, materials and offers in this toolkit are to be understood only as recommendations resulting from the bilateral working group.

- ❖ **Communication:** Maintain regular communication with your partner in the other country, especially during times of conflict or heightened tensions when communication may become more challenging.
- ❖ Acknowledge that the realities in the two countries are very different at the moment. Remind yourself of the importance of your partnership.
- ❖ **Information:** Inform yourself about discourses and developments in the other country after October 7 (Chapter 1 offers an overview of events and developments).
 - **For facilitators from Germany:**
 - Familiarize yourself with the main roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in case you need to answer participants' questions.
 - Familiarize yourself with Israel's geography and demographics.
 - Be particularly sensitive about the fact that many people in Israel are in a state of grief.
 - **For facilitators from Israel:**
 - Familiarize yourself with current discourses that have been dominant in German society since October 7.
 - Familiarize yourself with Germany's demographics and diversity of biographies.
 - Familiarize yourself with questions about political developments in Israel. Try to recognize and tell the difference between a curious question and what might be perceived as an anti-Israeli or antisemitic comment.
- ❖ **Preparation:** Prepare your group with the proposed activities in the toolkit (Chapter 2, Part I) regarding October 7.
- ❖ Include the preparation around the topic of October 7 in addition to the existing preparation that is an integral part of any German-Israeli Exchange program.
- ❖ Invite former exchange participants to share their firsthand experiences with parents and prospective participants.
- ❖ Keep in good touch with parents. Integrate them in the kickoff meeting, and hold an open discussion that alleviates concerns.
- ❖ Prepare guests, relevant speakers or tour guides with important information about the character of the group.

- :: **Participant safety & well-being:** Develop a comprehensive safety plan, including emergency protocols. Pay attention to the participants' emotional well-being.
 - **For the group from Israel:**

Is there any participant who is grieving or suffering from loss? Where are the participants from in Israel, and what have they been experiencing in the last few months? Have any of them served in reserve duty during this period?
 - **For the group from Germany:**

What questions and concerns do participants have regarding the events of October and the ongoing war? Are there any participants with a strong connection to the Middle East region? Is there anyone who may be grieving or experiencing loss due to the ongoing war in Gaza?
- :: Ensure that the focus of the overall preparation is not solely on the events of October 7. Youth exchange programs offer meaningful, enjoyable, and exciting experiences, and they will continue to do so even in challenging times like these.
- :: **During the encounter:** Make sure to establish a safe environment and a good bond among participants before dealing with the topic of October 7.
- :: Discuss with the leadership team on which day of the exchange October 7 should be given a central place. It is advisable to introduce the topic after the second day of the program.
- :: Include 1–2 activities from Chapter 2, Part II – Education and Encounter after October 7.
- :: Encourage participants to listen openly to each other, even when their life realities may vary significantly.
- :: Joint workshops and excursions that focus on the values of a democratic and inclusive society can be beneficial and help bring young people together in times of crisis.
- :: Encourage participants to close the day with a shared activity of remembrance on October 7 together.
- :: Creative tools such as theater, music, and art help participants deal with these sensitive issues, allowing them to express themselves and get in touch with each other and themselves.
- :: Make space for difficult conversations but also leave room for dreams, new ideas and aspirations. Youth exchange programs are transformative experiences, often resulting in lifelong friendships formed during these unforgettable days!



CHAPTER 1

October 7 – A Timeline of Events and
Implications for the Israeli & German Society



The terrorist attacks of October 7 affected Israeli and German society very differently. Israeli society, being the direct target of the attacks, experienced profound trauma and faces many challenges up until today. While many people in Germany were shocked by what had happened and expressed their grief and solidarity, the impact on society as a whole can hardly be compared with that in Israel.

To foster meaningful exchanges in light of the events, it is crucial that facilitators of German-Israeli youth exchange are aware of the different implications and discourses surrounding the events in both societies.

This chapter begins with a timeline of the events of October 7 and the historical context provided by Israeli historian Uriel Kashi. The following three texts explore the impacts of October 7 for Israeli society: In his text “The Youth of Israel Calls to Bring Them Home Now”, Roy Shaul (Israeli Scouts) explains the objectives of the “Hostages and Missing Families Forum”, established on October 8, and the role of youth in it. Efrat Simenhaus-Shafran (Regional Council Emek Hefer) addresses the consequences of the events for Israeli civil society, ranging from unity and solidarity to trauma and existential fears. In his text “We Must Rebuild. But at What Price?”, George Stevens (The Working and Studying Youth) offers a personal account of life near Gaza’s border in Sderot, reflecting on how the events shaped his life. He also poses questions for the future of Israeli youth that have yet to be answered.

The second part of the chapter deals with the reactions following October 7 in Germany. After an overview of developments in the German society, three essays from professionals of German-Israeli exchanges follow. Sabine Klein (Bavarian Youth Council) writes about the effects of October 7 for Bavarian youth work. In her text “Creating Space for Understanding and Mutual Respect”, Bettina Pinzl describes her experiences as an educator in a diverse Berlin district and emphasizes the importance of creating spaces of dialog, learning and education against hatred, racism and anti-semitism. Finally, Martina Kölsch, a school teacher in the rural town of Overath offers a personal perspective on the situation following October 7 at her school which has close ties to Israel.



**OCTOBER 7 AND
ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR
THE ISRAELI SOCIETY**

I. The Terror Attack of October 7 – A Timeline of Events

Uriel Kashi

- ⚡ On October 7, a Shabbat at the end of the Jewish festival of Sukkot, the terrorist organization Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups launched “Operation al-Aqsa Flood”. The attack began at 6:30 am with extensive rocket attacks on the coastal cities of Ashdod and Ashkelon, as well as on Tel Aviv, Wadi Ara and later on Jerusalem. More than 3,000 rockets were fired in the first few hours. Until today, the figure has now risen to more than 12,000 rockets – with the sole aim of killing civilians.
- ⚡ At the same time, Hamas terrorists attacked the security barriers between the Gaza Strip and Israel. With the help of gliders, drones, explosives and bulldozers, around 2,000 Hamas militants managed to cross the border. The terrorists invaded about 24 km into Israel’s heartland on vehicles and paragliders and took over several military and police facilities.
- ⚡ The terrorists also carried out attacks on Israeli towns, kibbutzim and roads, killing or taking hostage hundreds of Israeli officials and civilians. The residents sought shelter in bunkers while some spent up to 48 hours there until they were found and freed by the Israeli security forces. In Kibbutz Be’eri alone, the terrorists murdered ten percent of the residents of the Kibbutz.
- ⚡ The Hamas massacre at the Nova music festival near Re’im, where terrorists murdered some 364 young partygoers, received a lot of attention.
- ⚡ In the attack from the Gaza Strip, more than 1,200 people have been murdered so far, including civilians, police officers and soldiers. Over 2,900 injured persons have been hospitalized. In addition, 253 were abducted from Israel into the Gaza Strip, including families with young children and elderly people.
- ⚡ In the meantime, 105 hostages have been exchanged for Palestinians prisoners from Israeli jails in a deal to release the hostages. Others have been freed, and the bodies of some hostages have been recovered. There are currently (as of 15.03.2024) 134 hostages still in the Gaza Strip. However, it can be assumed that more than 30 hostages are no longer alive.
- ⚡ Hamas’ apparently long-planned actions remind of other terrorist Islamist organizations such as ISIS or Al-Qaeda.
- ⚡ On the 11th of October 2023 Israel forms a war cabinet including the opposition politician and former defense minister Benny Gantz.
- ⚡ The attack was unprecedented in tactics and scope, as Israel has not fought street battles on its own territory against its opponents since the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. It has also never experienced such a serious terrorist attack in which so many civilians were killed.

Israeli responses to the attack:

- ❖ The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were surprised by the attack from the Gaza Strip and hastily tried to regroup.
- ❖ In response to the attack, the IDF launched “Operation Iron Swords”. The primary goal of the operation was to recapture the territory controlled by Hamas and free the hostages. It took more than two days for Israeli troops to regain control.
- ❖ On October 8, the Israeli Security Cabinet officially declared a state of war.
- ❖ The Israeli army mobilized over 360,000 reservists, the largest mobilization since the founding of the state.
- ❖ 29 Israeli towns near the border with Gaza were evacuated by Israel. Over five months, close to 160,000 Israeli citizens have been displaced from their homes and become refugees in their own country.
- ❖ During the war, the Israeli air force carried out attacks in the Gaza Strip. Among other things, the Palestine Tower building was destroyed from the air. As the building was used by both civilians and Hamas terror members, the IDF used the “roof-knocking” to warn the civilians and minimize civilian casualties.
- ❖ A large part of Hamas’ terrorist infrastructure is located in the north of the Gaza Strip. In order to minimize civilian casualties during a ground offensive, the Israeli army has been calling on the civilian population in the north of the Gaza Strip for days to leave their homes via rescue corridors and flee to the south. The IDF is now also operating in the South.
- ❖ Since the beginning of the ground offensive, 240 (as of 25.02.2024) Israeli soldiers have been killed, which means a very high number of casualties for the Israeli side.
- ❖ The military operation against Hamas, which abuses civilians as human shields, has caused a high number of casualties on the Palestinian side. Even if the figures provided by Hamas are not reliable, it can be assumed that more than 29,000 people have been killed since the beginning of the war. This figure includes killed fighters of Hamas and other terrorist organizations.
- ❖ By its brutal attack, Hamas bears the responsibility for the consequences of this war. This war would be over soon if Hamas surrendered, released all hostages and handed over its weapons to Israel.

Other conflicts in the region and their backgrounds:

- ❖ Apart from Gaza, there were also clashes in the West Bank.
- ❖ Artillery fire was also exchanged between the IDF and Lebanese Hezbollah on the Israeli-Lebanese border in the north of the country. There were also several attempts by terrorists, including the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), to infiltrate Israel from Lebanon.

- ❖ The terror group Hezbollah is the dominant force in southern Lebanon. It has around 40,000 rockets in the so-called Unifil area, which it stores in various Shiite villages. In total, Hezbollah has around 150,000 rockets. The official Lebanese army is not in a position to disarm Hezbollah without triggering a civil war.
- ❖ Hezbollah has repeatedly attacked northern Israel with anti-tank weapons, rockets and drones, killing civilians in the process. As a result, 70,000 people had to be evacuated from near the border with Lebanon.
- ❖ In December 2018, Israel discovered tunnels on the Israeli-Lebanese border not far from the Israeli town of Metulla. Hezbollah's aim was apparently to smuggle Hezbollah fighters through these tunnels, block the roads to Metulla, lay siege to Metulla and organize a massacre. Hamas has now implemented a similar strategy from the Gaza Strip.
- ❖ Israel and the international community are making great efforts to ensure that the conflict does not escalate. Involvement by Hezbollah from Lebanon or Islamist elements from the West Bank would push Israel into a multi-front war that would claim many more lives on both sides than is already the case.

Historical background on Gaza Strip and Hamas:

- ❖ Mohammed Deif, the leader of Hamas' military wing, justified the attack with Israeli alleged "violations" of the Al-Aqsa Mosque and called on the residents of Gaza and the Arabs in Israel to join the attack. It is to be expected that Hamas and other state players will put alleged Israeli plans to destroy Islamic sites at the forefront of their fake PR campaign.
- ❖ Hamas, an affiliate of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, claims that British colonialism and imperialism have done considerable damage to the region, causing the Arab transition to modernity to fail. They proclaim Western values have driven the Arab world to ruins. Hamas sees a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam as the solution, which should shape all areas of people's lives. In addition to its paramilitary branch, Hamas is also active in setting up and creating educational networks and hospitals. This is one of the reasons why Hamas enjoys great support among Palestinians.



- ❖ Following Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, the area was under the control of the Palestinian Authority until June 2007. After winning elections, Hamas took control of the Strip by force in 2007. Hamas does not recognize the agreements concluded between Israel and the PLO. It does not recognize Israel's right to exist and has carried out numerous acts of terrorism against Israel in recent years, in particular rocket attacks.
- ❖ Israel responded with various military operations and, together with Egypt, imposed a blockade on the area.
- ❖ Nevertheless, Israel came to an arrangement with the status quo in the years leading up to the attack, with Hamas controlling the Gaza Strip and the Palestinian Authority controlling certain areas (A+B) in the West Bank. In order to improve the living conditions of the population, Israel granted Hamas various concessions and issued work permits for Gazans to work in Israel. Israel also allowed Qatari donations about USD 30 million per month to be transferred to the Gaza Strip.

Uriel Kashi is a German-speaking tour guide, historian and educator. Since 2007 he lives in Israel and has been involved in a large series of German-Israeli projects in regard to Democracy Education, Holocaust Education etc. (reiseleiter-israel.de)



Further material



Facilitators are recommended to use the PowerPoint in the appendix for a presentation of an overview of the events during the exchange program.

kurzelinks.de/appendix-presentation-october7-israel



CROWNE PLAZA
CITY CENTER

יהוד ננצח





II. The Youth of Israel Calls to Bring Them Home Now

Roy Shaul

On October 7, the tranquility of Israel was shattered, leaving many families in a desperate search for information about their loved ones. Families were consumed with news and tried to figure out what is going on, with no official government representative to give them information. Amidst the chaos, contact was lost with hundreds, igniting a nationwide concern.

In response, by October 8, “The Hostages and Missing Families Forum” emerged, founded by the families of those unaccounted for. Their first initial task was daunting yet critical: Compiling lists to determine who was safe, who had perished, and who had been abducted into the Gaza Strip by Hamas. The realization soon dawned on us, the scale of the crisis was far beyond our worst fears: 253 individuals, including the elderly, women, and infants, were confirmed as hostages.

The forum’s operations span several crucial areas:

- ❖ **Support for the families:** Recognizing that families of hostages face unimaginable distress, the forum provides personalized mental health support, facilitates government financial aid, and assists with day-to-day challenges. Their mission is to ensure that no family navigates this crisis alone.
- ❖ **Awareness campaigns:** Through poignant exhibits like “The Empty Shabbat Table” a long dinner table set ready with empty chairs, waiting for the hostages to come back and widespread “BRING THEM HOME NOW” campaigns, including impactful displays in Times Square, NYC, the forum has galvanized international attention and solidarity for the hostages’ plight.
- ❖ **Legal and diplomatic efforts:** The forum has been instrumental in engaging politicians and diplomats globally, advocating tirelessly for the hostages’ return. By sharing personal stories of the hostages in parliaments around the world, they have humanized this crisis and intensified calls for action.

On the morning of October 10, I came to the headquarters of the forum for the first time, as the official representative of the Israeli Scouts. My first mission was to establish the Youth Movement Desk that will consist of representatives from all the youth movements in Israel. This initiative unites all Israeli youth movements in a shared commitment to raising awareness and advocating for the hostages. The resilience of Israel’s youth in the wake of this tragedy has been a beacon of hope and strength, demonstrated through:



- ❑ **Logistics operations:** Spearheaded by the youth, over 30,000 signs have been distributed nationwide, alongside the dissemination of informative brochures.
- ❑ **The Youth March:** Led by the Israeli Scouts and the youth of Kfar Aza, a significant mobilization saw over 10,000 teenagers march from Tel Aviv to the Knesset in Jerusalem, symbolizing unity, and determination.
- ❑ **Assemblies and rallies:** The hostages' square in Tel Aviv has become a focal point for youth-led gatherings, amplifying their voices and dedication to the cause.
- ❑ **Local initiatives:** Youth movement branches across the country have organized ceremonies and gatherings, each a testament to the collective resolve to see the hostages returned.

The harrowing realities faced by the hostages, as gradually unveiled through intelligence and the testimonies of those fortunate enough to be released, underscore the urgency of our mission. Subjected to inhumane conditions (without any permit for official organizations such as “The Red Cross” to visit them), denied medical care, and subjected to daily abuses, the hostages' plight is a stark reminder of the cruel reality of their captivity. The absence of basic necessities and medical treatment, coupled with the psychological torment of their situation, has led to an intolerable existence.

Our call to action is clear and unwavering: We must BRING THEM HOME NOW. The cost of inaction is too great, measured in human lives. Israel stands at a critical juncture, where the moral imperative to save these innocent lives must transcend all else. The return of the hostages cannot wait; it is a duty we owe to them, their families, and to the very principles of humanity and justice we cherish.

Roy Shaul is the International Delegation Director in the Israeli Scouts (Tzofim). He is the youth movement's representative in the “Hostages and Missing Families Forum” and a founding member of the Youth Movement Desk.



III. “On the Edge” – The Civilian Frontline since October 7

Efrat Simenhaus-Shafran

On October 6, 2023, the Israeli society was wounded and divided because of existing divisions on political issues related to religion and state. The events of October 7 changed everything in an instant. The brutal terrorist attack carried out by terrorists of Hamas changed life as we knew it.

The citizens banded together, regardless of religion and political outlook and mobilized for the benefit of the state. Overnight, private individuals established logistic organizations in the various fields that took care of every need and interest in all areas of life. The disputes moved aside and there was an atmosphere of unity.

Volunteering included food donations for the army, personal and necessary equipment for combat soldiers, transportation and more. Families opened their homes to host evacuated families, organized events, performances by singers, donations of every kind, rescued animals and more. In the agriculture sector, since the foreign workers left, schools, companies and private individuals volunteered in agriculture while scholarships were given to student volunteers. Families of the reservists received help in all the daily activities by youth movements and community activists. Advocacy activities and dissemination of information in the world, in every possible media, were led by civil societies and celebrities.

Israel is mobilizing for war: The civilian security component became significant, because it was understood that in the event of a security incident or an emergency, the community defense would be required to provide the initial response and protect the lives of the residents until the army and police arrived. “Security civilians groups” were established, received weapons and combat equipment and began security activities in the settlements.

A mass recruitment of reserve soldiers was held, on a scale not seen since the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Over 300,000 reserve men and women were recruited to the army. From one moment to the other, they were cut off from their regular jobs, lives and families. A high percentage of them were already recruited on October 7 or 8, and are still being recruited today without any expectation of the date when they will finish their reserve service and return to normal life. Since October 7, many families function only when one of the parents is at home.

The existential fear: The damage to the fabric of life, to the sense of personal and existential security, the exposure to the difficult and shocking images and events that happened in the South and at the Nova party required a number of urgent interventions and treatment and an emotional response at all levels of society.

A study, recently published by The Lancet¹, reveals alarming figures in Israeli citizens, both Jewish and Arab, indicating a near doubling of probable PTSD, depression, and anxiety in the weeks following the Hamas-led attacks. The prevalence rates reached 29% for PTSD, 42% for depression, and 44% for generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), almost double the prevalence recorded rates just two months before the assault.

The families of the reservists were affected. Workplaces were closed, private businesses went bankrupt, the women of the reservists reported a decrease in their income. The war and the absence of one parent have a profound effect on the mental state of both the spouses and the children. Negative changes in the mental state, sadness or unhappiness were reported, together with a stronger need for mental support.

In order to strengthen the Israeli spirit, private and public initiatives arose that distributed stickers and signs with statements such as “Together we will win”, Israeli flags were hung on houses, vehicles and in the public space. A great solidarity was felt when thousands of people joined to accompany the dead in funeral ceremonies on the roadsides holding state flags as a guard of honor.

“On the edge”: The fighting started in the South and the North, but everyone feels it. Even if you are not in the combat zone, you are affected in one way or another. Alarms, missiles, running to the shelters. Sound of motorcycles and thunders remind of alarms and explosions. School curricula were changed, content for graduation was cut. Teachers and students are not available for learning. Stores are financially damaged. Teenagers go to funerals of friends and family keens. Parents bury their children, women and children bury the father of the family. Hundreds of families joined the circle of bereavement.

Every Israeli has someone there that they know. Every phone ringing alerts relatives and friends whose children are in the army. Silencing WhatsApp groups, sleeping intermittently and checking the phone all the time. Every knock on the door is stressful. There is a fear of receiving the “bitter news” that a member of your family was killed in battle.

1 PTSD, depression, and anxiety after the October 7, 2023 attack in Israel: a nationwide prospective study eClinicalMedicine Vol. 68, Published: January 5, 2024. Yossi Levi-Belz, Yoav Groweiss, Carmel Blank, Yuval Neria

The routine is that at 6:00 am when you wake up, you check the internet news about the “price” of human life the previous day – how many soldiers were killed. The heart is torn every morning anew, by words that have become a nightmare for an entire country “Cleared for publication”. War has become routine. Happy events such as weddings are celebrated in a limited forum, cultural shows are cancelled.

My home is not my castle anymore: The border crosses the center of the state as well. I live in a village located in the middle of Israel, near the border which is only hundreds of meters away from a big city within the Palestinian Authority. Our routine since October 7 is shootings targeting my village, a drone flying all night on security missions, companies of soldiers guarding, sounds of explosions and artillery, mainly at night. The areas near the fence are forbidden to walk. There is a feeling of constant tension that even your home is not safe.

The youth: The youth are much less busy with recreation, trips and travel, and it is clear that the desire to volunteer for meaningful positions in the army is increasing. They are less happy, and do not plan for the long term. Some of them suffer from hardships and fears because of the situation, and the parents are also more stressed and less likely to let the youth go out, walk around and travel places outside the home. Girls are afraid of being raped. Small children are back to wetting the bed at night, and sleeping with their parents. Israeli society is scarred.

Our mission: No one expected that some 80 years after the Second World War the Jewish people would be massacred in their homes, that antisemitism in the world and hatred of the Jews would reach such great proportions, including discourse on the destruction of the State of Israel and the justification of the massacre that was carried out on October 7.

The Israeli and German youth, who take part in the youth exchange, speak and know each other. It is our job to lead them to establish a generation of people who will be ambassadors for democratic values, aware about the dangers of antisemitism and xenophobia.

Efrat Simenhaus-Shafran is the Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs at Emek Hefer Regional Council. She is responsible for the youth delegations starting from the planning stage, recruiting the youth, building the delegation plan, preparations, and training the staff. She holds a Master's Degree in Public Policy from Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

#BRINGTHEMHOME

OHAD BEN Y





IV. We Must Rebuild. But at What Price?

George Stevens

We live in the high-rise building closest to Gaza, some two km from the border. The balcony of my apartment faces Gaza, and we know they can see us quite clearly from their side of the border. In late 2022, I led the leaders of the DBJR (German Council of Youth Movements) on a tour of Sderot – and I insisted that they come into my home and see just how close Gaza is with their own eyes. They asked to see our Mamad (shelter room), and asked to see the nearest Iron Dome – something that had never happened to me on the dozens of tours I have led of Sderot. I showed them that I live communally – that I am part of an urban kibbutz with 30 other people, that our living room is set up for dinners of 12+ people every night.

It was hard for them to understand why I would raise my child there – and all my answers were heavy. Firstly, I told them – being Jewish means a lot of people hate you and some want to kill you. Here in Israel, at least, we have the means to defend ourselves – and part of what maintains our sovereignty and defense is that we live on the land, including on our borders. Secondly, unlike Germany, Israel is a country whose future existence is not guaranteed. If we do not defend ourselves, deal with internal divisions, and make sure the next generation has good reasons to be here – then Israel will not be around for long. I live in Sderot because I want to be part of building a more united and resilient Israeli society.

Fast-forward to October 7. My son, my partner Yael and I had chosen to spend the holiday at her parents' house near Tel Aviv. We woke up to siren alerts from our phone at around 6:30 am. Within an hour, we had received a video with trucks filled with terrorists driving down Sderot's main street. By 8:15 am, my friends from my urban kibbutz were hearing gunfire from the street, and our building's WhatsApp group received a photo from the building next to us showing that terrorists had broken in there. Someone from my building called the police – but they never came. That was when we started to realize that this was not just a massive Hamas invasion – but also that the IDF had completely lost control.

At this point my family and I were safe – but I was certain that my building was going to be next, and that many of my best friends and their children might be killed. It was maybe the scariest, most helpless moment of my life. Everyone locked themselves in their Mamad, hoping for the best.

Luckily, for reasons I will never know, the terrorists never broke into our building. All my closest friends survived.



Our balcony where I stood with the leaders of DBJR now has bullet holes, and a glass door was also shattered from gunfire.

We learned that evening that a couple from our building – Dolev and Odaya Suissa – had tried that morning to escape the city with their two young daughters, but had driven by the Hamas terrorists. They killed Dolev. Odaya wanted to get away but did not know how to drive – luckily a Bedouin man named Amar Abu Sabila got in and tried to save them. He took them all to the Sderot police station, where he thought they would find safety.

Unfortunately, he got there right as it became the center of Hamas' assault on the city. The terrorists murdered both Odaya and Amar – but the girls survived, perhaps thanks to Amar's bravery.

Two key takeaways from the story:

1. Jewish life up until Israel's establishment included the feeling my friends felt when the terrorists were outside our building, because Jewish life before 1948 included pogroms. Jews almost everywhere, in almost every century, knew the feeling that we might be beaten, killed, raped, or expelled for being Jewish. We thought the creation of Israel ended that – but October 7 proved it did not.
2. We need light, not just pain and grief. Amar's story is one small example of that, and we must educate on these stories of hope and heroism.

Do we go back?

My partner Yael and I must decide, with our friends, if we are going to go back to Sderot, and raise a toddler there. Not in five years, but in the next few months.

My movement, NOAL, has been the organization that has worked with the most evacuated youth in Israel. We now have 600 kids and teens from Sderot, scattered across the country, who participate in our activities. But to keep this going when schools re-open in early March, we need to make a massive effort. Yael, my partner, was chosen to lead this effort – given a safe, empowering space to youth who just survived a massacre and lived as displaced persons for almost half a year.

Yael's new position is vital. But are we ready to go back living there with a toddler, while the war is still going on and the bullet holes have yet to be fixed? When we know that October 7 has happened and maybe something like it could happen again?

This is a terrifying and difficult choice. We cannot abandon our youth, our city, our movement at this time. But can I really imagine playing with my beautiful little boy on our balcony with Gaza just two kilometers away?

Key Dilemmas Facing Israeli Youth after October 7 and the Current War

How do you restore a sense of agency? Anyone who has been through severe trauma feels a lack of control – this is important to restore for Israeli youth in general, but in particular for those who survived October 7, those who lost loved ones or had family/friends kidnapped. For those who have been evacuated for five months, living in a hotel or with extended family, with your friends/school/neighborhood scattered all over the country, there is a very intense lack of control. A key question we must face is: How can informal education be a key tool in helping youth regain a sense of agency and meaning in a chaotic and tragic reality? What social space, what processing and what relationship with counselors and educators is needed? It is important to understand this process started on October 8 and will continue for years, and our answers need to constantly evolve to reflect where our youth are at.

How do we rebuild trust between Jewish and Arab youth, after what has happened? Many Arab Israelis were also murdered on October 7 and this created some level of common experience. On the other hand, Jewish Israelis experience what is going on via the mainstream news in Israel and relatives in the army, whereas Arab Israelis experience it via Arabic-language media and sometimes from relatives in Gaza. These are two very different perspectives – how can we build positive bridges between these two communities? Can we create a shared narrative of what happened on October 7?

How do we bridge gaps between the affected communities? Many kibbutzim experienced a much more severe attack, some of them lost over 10% of their community to murder or being kidnapped, while in Sderot it was less than 1% (our city lost 50 people – a huge number! – but we are a much bigger town with 25,000 people). On the other hand, Sderot is a poorer and historically marginalized city – and the kibbutzim often got more donations, more publicity, more funding from the government, more opportunities to travel abroad. How do we make sure the experience of October 7 and the war help unite these youth, rather than just dividing them further?

George Stevens is an evacuated resident of Sderot, a member of an urban kibbutz in the city, a father of an 18-month-old toddler, and leader of international partnerships in NOAL, Israel's largest Jewish-Arab youth movement. Originally American, he made Aliyah to Israel 13 years ago, and has lived in Sderot for seven years.

The background is a solid purple color with a pattern of overlapping, semi-transparent circles and arcs in various shades of purple, creating a layered, geometric effect.

**OCTOBER 7 AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR
THE GERMAN SOCIETY**

V. After October 7 – An Overview of Developments in the German Society Between Solidarity and Protest

The German society was deeply shocked by the atrocities committed by Hamas on October 7. The reactions of German politicians in government and opposition were almost coherent. In the words of Chancellor Scholz: “At this moment there is only one place for Germany. The place on Israel’s side”.¹ This attitude was also evident in the numerous state visits to Israel by leading German politicians, including president Steinmeier.

The civil society expressed their solidarity with Israel by going out on the streets and standing by the Jewish communities, both in form of intimate events such as a vigil or a Shabbat Table in honor of the hostages, as well as larger events such as protests and rallies. The largest rally, called for by a broad alliance of various political parties, religious communities, organizations and trade unions, took place on October 22 in front of the Brandenburg Gate. Over 10.000 participants gathered under the slogan “Stand up against Terror, Hatred and Antisemitism – in Solidarity and Compassion with Israel”.² Smaller rallies in solidarity with Israel also took place in various other German cities.

At the same time, many people in Germany, both those with and without personal ties to the region of the Middle East, expressed their solidarity and concern for the Palestinian people and the civilian victims of the resulting war between the Israeli army and Hamas. Large numbers of people went out on the streets while the number of participants in these rallies visibly exceeded the number of participants in pro-Israel rallies.

While the right to protest is unquestionable, problematic events took place during these protests as well. Antisemitic slogans were repeatedly chanted and posters with statements trivializing terrorism and antisemitism were displayed. Statements expressing Israel-related antisemitism were particularly frequent, for example when protestors equated the military action against Hamas with the persecution of Jews during Nazi Germany. Among violent attacks and confrontations with the police, Islamist paroles and aggressive statements were made as well. These either denied the antisemitic terror of October 7 or

1 <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2023/kw41-de-regierungserklaerung-970542> [last accessed 20 March 2024]

2 www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Frank-Walter-Steinmeier/Reden/2023/10/231022-Kundgebung-Dt-Israelische-Gesellschaft.html [last accessed 20 March 2024]



presented it as a legitimate struggle for liberation. These events led anew to debates within the German society and polarization as to what is a legitimate form of protest and what promotes hate speech and antisemitism.

Rise of Antisemitism as a Result of the Events of October 7

As a response to the aforementioned events, a statement video was published in which Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister of Economy, Robert Habeck, condemned the growing antisemitism and even explained the complexity of recognizing antisemitic expressions. The video, viewed by 42 Million people, received a great response, both in Germany and abroad. In the weeks following October 7, the number of antisemitic incidents rose by more than 300%.³ The range of antisemitic attacks became quite broad. Antisemitic hate speech was spread on the internet as well as directly targeting Jews. Memorials were smeared, attacked and damaged. There were also various incidents of violent assaults against people, including disputes between university students. Among some of the most repellent events belongs the marking of Jewish homes with the David Star as well as the attack on a synagogue in Berlin with incendiary material on October 18.

3 Bundesverband RIAS e. V.: Antisemitische Reaktionen auf den 07. Oktober, S. 4. [cf. www.report-antisemitism.de/documents/2023-11-28_antisemitische_reaktionen_in_deutschland_auf_die_hamas-massaker_in_israel_2.pdf, last accessed 20 March 2024]

Jewish Perspectives: Between Insecurity and Isolation

The alarming increase in antisemitic expressions and attacks led to a situation of insecurity for Jews in Germany. Jewish life was restricted even more than before or could only take place under even stronger protective measures.⁴ Jewish students report that universities have become an unsafe place for them while antisemitic expressions are made not only from students but also from the university staff. Despite the signs of solidarity from a part of the German society, the feeling of loneliness still dominates among many Jews. A lot of them feel insecure at work and in their private lives and have the impression that the great outcry that would be appropriate in view of these developments has failed to be expressed.

Education after October 7

Teachers and youth workers were facing major challenges in the weeks following October 7. The enormous emotionalization among young people, fueled by the dynamics on social media platforms, was not a new phenomenon in regards to the Middle East. Yet, its dimensions reached a new level after the October events and the resulting war.⁵ In some cases, educators were overwhelmed with the task of providing youngsters with an appropriate space for their emotions and thoughts and at the same time engaging in a respectful dialogue that sets clear boundaries against the trivialization of terror and antisemitic statements. This uncertainty is due to a lack of knowledge about the history of the region and a lack of capability to recognize antisemitism. In some cases, too little attention was paid to the fear and needs of Jewish pupils during this time.

At the same time, many educators and institutions with extensive experience in dealing with these issues reacted quickly to the new challenges. They offered guidance, workshops and further training. Educational methods and materials that have been in use for a long time, were brought to the attention of a broader public. In this way, many educators were strengthened in their ability to act. However, the demand remains great.



Further material



Facilitators are recommended to use the PowerPoint in the appendix for a presentation of an overview of the events during an exchange program.
[kurzlinks.de/appendix-presentation-october7-germany](https://www.kurzlinks.de/appendix-presentation-october7-germany)

4 www.rbb-online.de/kontraste/archiv/judenhass--unser-leben-nach-dem-7--oktober.html [last accessed 20 March 2024]

5 Bildungsstätte Anne Frank: Die TikTok-Intifada – Der 7. Oktober & die Folgen im Netz, 2024. [cf. https://www.bs-anne-frank.de/fileadmin/content/Publikationen/Weiteres_P%C3%A4dagogisches_Material/TikTok_Report_BS_Anne_Frank_2024.pdf, last accessed 20 March 2024]



VI. Bavarian Youth Work after October 7 – Reevaluating Political Education

Sabine Klein

The Bavarian Youth Council (BJR) is on the one hand the umbrella organization for most of the youth organizations and youth centers in Bavaria and on the other hand the executive arm of the Ministry of Education when it comes to school exchange in Bavaria. The BJR has been engaged in exchanges with Israel since the 1960s.

Not only the field of exchanges with Israel has changed a lot after October 7, but also the work of youth organizations in general, especially with regard to democracy education.

Reactions after October 7: Shift from Solidarity to Debate

The horrific massacres of October 7 lead to a strong reaction of shock and solidarity within the society and our structures. The BJR immediately made a press release, stating our solidarity with the victims, the partners and the country as a whole. So did many of the youth organizations, especially those who have a close relation to Israel.

We explicitly stressed that Israel had the legitimate right to self-defense, just like any other country, since we already anticipated that any military reaction by Israel to October 7 would bring a shift from solidarity to criticism or even hatred. The following reactions to the war in Gaza made very clear that antisemitic stereotypes and narratives are not a thing of the past but continue with ever new narratives. The very strength of our youth work structures is its diversity, so many debates within society are also present within the youth work structures.

Since October 7 we have fostered our belief once again that those organizations engaged in youth exchange with Israel have been dealing very well with the high complexity of the debate. To meet and know actual people from the region helps to look further than public narratives and animosities.

Since physical exchange is not happening at the moment, the focus of the BJR in the exchange field has shifted to the following points:

- ❖ Connect with the trauma of the Israeli society: It is important to remind ourselves what a horrific event October 7 was, so that we do not lose connection with what the Israeli society is going through. This can best be done through personal contact with Israeli friends and partner organizations. For the time being, also digital formats are being used within the projects.
- ❖ Enable physical youth and school exchange as soon as possible: the personal contact cannot be replaced, not through digital seminars, not through intellectual speeches, not through books or media coverage. We are working on creating possibilities to enable exchange in Germany. This requires an adjustment of the funding structure, of methods and structures to ensure that everyone can feel safe physically and mentally and to enable a meaningful dialog about and despite what has happened.
- ❖ Keep on speaking up for Israel: It is difficult to speak up for Israel. It can bring conflict within friendships or lead to hate comments on social media etc. The questions we have to ask in these debates are: What options are there for Israel to react? Do we really understand the extent, continuity and cruelty of October 7? We need to stay there a little bit and not rush to “Yes it was horrible, but ...!” Even if it brings discomfort, we need to choose to speak up for Israel in daily life, show courage and be allies.



Political Education Is Being Reevaluated in Germany

All the public debates, but also attacks on Jewish people in Germany after October 7 started a new debate on our way of conducting political education, on our culture of remembrance and raises the question if it has been effective or if we have to adjust it.

Youth work in general is searching for new ways to defend democracy, and antisemitism is one of the mechanisms that puts our democracy at stake.

A few points seem to be crucial for Bavarian Youth Work in the future:

- ❖ Learning to spot antisemitism: Workshops and educational interventions to learn about antisemitism have increased. It is crucial to teach these mechanisms and continuities, so that young people can spot antisemitism when it occurs and refrain from perpetuating it.
- ❖ Learning to live with dilemmas: The gaze towards Israel and the region always teaches us very clearly that black-and-white explanations are a thing of the past. This is also becoming more and more visible within our own society. Young (and old!) people need to learn to cope with ambiguities and dilemmas.
- ❖ Learning to live in the post-fact era: We live in a post-fact era, where the “actual events” are less important than the narratives that are created around it, mainly through media and social media. There needs to be more education on how to handle the pitfalls of social media (echo chamber problem; how to spot right-wing or antisemitic content that young people often see themselves faced with, sometimes without even realizing it).
- ❖ Learning to improve our debate culture: We observe in many fields that people are less capable to conduct an argument without delegitimizing their counterpart. A strong democratic society needs this skill.

The field of political education and youth work is still debating and searching for new strategies on how to put the lessons learned into practice. We hope that the resources and the political climate for this important work will prevail.

Sabine Klein is a political scientist and mediator. For the last 15 years she has been working in the field of school and youth exchange with various countries, since 2018 as Israel exchange coordinator for the Bavarian Youth Council.

VII. Creating Space for Understanding and Mutual Respect

Bettina Pinzl

Besides my freelancing activities within the field of German-Israeli youth exchanges I am working as the head of a project called “Demokratie in der Mitte” (Democracy in the Middle) dealing with questions of democracy education and antidiscrimination (of all kinds) on a communal level in Berlin-Mitte. Mitte is a very diverse district in Berlin in regard to religions, migration and social backgrounds. Many Turkish and Arab people live here, as well as migrants and descendants from East Europe and African countries. In the district you can find also three synagogues as well as several places of remembrance on the Shoah, but the Jewish population living in the district is fairly small.

After the cruel attacks led by Hamas of October 7, 2023 and the resulting war my working context is quite different than it was before. In the first days and weeks many colleagues – who know about my professional and private relations to Israel – came and showed solidarity and support. There was a deep shock about the massacre. But it also became clear that many people do not know a lot about the history of the conflict and the situation in Israel, Gaza or the West Bank. Many questions were asked, as there are many uncertainties and wrong assumptions about the daily live in Israel.

There were also many requests from teachers, youth workers and multipliers on how to work with youngsters regarding the attacks of October 7 and the resulting war. As one of our working focuses is the work against antisemitism and antimuslim racism, we were already connected with some educators who in the aftermath of the attack went to schools to lead so called “dialogues” – a pair of educators consisting of a Jewish or Israeli and a Muslim or Palestinian perspective talking with German youngsters of various backgrounds. We financed one-day workshops in different schools and youth clubs with teams of educators. Also, the educational department of the House of One – a shared house of prayer, built by Jews, Christians and Muslims in Berlin-Mitte is engaged in these activities. A Jewish cantor and a Muslim imam are talking with youngsters with a focus on religious questions and how they look at the terror of October 7 and the aftermath. The feedbacks on these workshops are very positive, for one it is important for the youngsters to see a Jewish and Muslim team working together and to leave room for the questions and feelings they have.





Young people often do not know a lot about the massacre of October 7, the following war and the history of the region, even those who are connected to the region through family roots. Social media was and still is a source of fake facts and deeply psychologically harmful, violent pictures and videos. Above all, many young people told me that they feel that they have to take one side, they feel moral pressure is put on them, from friends, (social) media or teachers. In this situation it is important to, first of all, take this pressure off the youngsters. To let them hear many voices, explain to them (historical) facts and to support their tolerance of ambiguity. This means supporting the victims of the attack and the people taken hostage by the Hamas as well as being empathetic about the innocent victims of the war in Gaza. To tell the facts about the radical Islamic organization Hamas and their aims and to acknowledge the right of existence and defense of the state of Israel. It is also important to support German-Jewish youngsters (whose voices are often missing in German classes and youth clubs) and to talk about their current situation, their fears of the rising antisemitism in Germany and worldwide.

To reach this, it is important that educators in schools, youth clubs and community centers as well as those educators who work within the field of German-Israeli youth exchanges deal with the effects of the terror attacks for the Israeli society, the connection between the massacre of October 7 and the crimes of the Shoah as well as the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the current war. All of this is connected, but all of this also has to be viewed separately. Educators have to reflect about their own perspective and their “red lines” concerning antisemitic or antimuslim racist statements to form a clear position based on human values for everyone. This does not mean to have answers on every question, but to stand against antisemitic or racist statements. Important is not only to ban antisemitic statements, but to explain why they are antisemitic. Because of this we organize workshops for educators concerning the educational challenges after October 7. Also useful is the spreading of social media sources which bring in different voices into the discussion and talk against fake facts.

I also organized some dialogue rounds with very positive reactions. It is important to hear first, to ask where some thoughts and/or “facts” come from, how the speakers are involved, to bring in those voices that are missing and to speak against wrong facts. Besides trainings for better knowledge I think that moderated dialogue meetings for a better understanding are very important in the current situation. In groups where there is no Jewish perspective it is extremely important to bring in this perspective either with small video statements or with excerpts from articles.

For German-Israeli youth exchanges it is very important to work in the preparation with the youngsters – but also with their families – on the changes in Israeli society after October 7. Furthermore, it is important to talk about the rising antisemitism and its implications on the people and on the democratic systems worldwide. To talk about those people who as role models show support against hate and discrimination, no matter where it comes from. And finally, to strengthen those youngsters who are active in creating space for dialog and mutual respect.

Bettina Pinzl is a civic educator and political scientist organizing German-Israeli youth encounters since 2010. She is furthermore working in the field of Democracy Education and anti-discrimination in Berlin-Mitte.



VIII. The Impact of October 7 on Our Everyday School Life – A Personal Report

Martina Kölsch

The news of the brutal terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7, 2023 reached our school community in the middle of the autumn holidays and triggered a shock wave that still reverberates today.

First and foremost, there was great concern for our friends and acquaintances in Israel. A trip to Tel Aviv was planned for just two weeks later as part of our Israel exchange and our students were already in contact with their Israeli host siblings. For our exchange students and their parents, the events were therefore directly linked to very specific people and were very close to their hearts. While we were flooded with more and more disturbing news and images, we all tried to find out whether our friends – teachers and students alike – and their families were safe.

After a few days, it became clear that we would have to cancel our trip due to the security situation. Initially, we were left with the cautious prospect of being able to welcome the Israeli exchange group to Overath, at least in December. But even this comforting hope of a real encounter was dashed – this time it was the Israeli side that was not allowed to travel to Germany for security reasons. A bitter disappointment for us all. But the connection remains: The host siblings are still sending each other messages and parcels, and the sympathy of our school community is still there. We teachers are in close contact with our Israeli colleagues and friends and try to understand from a distance how radically the events are changing their lives. Sometimes we can only reassure each other of our mutual friendship in these difficult times.

One of the first reactions to October 7 was to prepare our school for the first days of school after the vacations: How could we inform the pupils in an age-appropriate way about the terrible events and the war they had triggered, how to accompany possible fears and how to support particularly vulnerable children and young people, for example the Ukrainian refugees who had experienced war themselves? The pupils reacted very differently: Some classes dealt intensively with the topic and initiated small solidarity projects such as peace wishes for all children in the region; they looked at the incomprehensible pain of the people without taking sides; others wished to quickly return to the safety of everyday routine; fears arose among some children, for example the concern that the war would spread. Most of them were reminded of the oppressive time when the war broke out in Ukraine.



There also were and are students and colleagues who identify particularly with the suffering of the Palestinian civilian population and clearly communicate their position in critical discussions. However, there is no underlying antisemitic attitude behind this and it does not lead to aggressive confrontations, as it is the case in other schools in the country. A quick survey of the pupils, staff and our school social worker confirms this personal impression. Our neighbor school also reports that peace at school has not been disturbed so far. Is this due to the fact that both our schools are located in rural areas?

As a school community, we are responding to the increasing number of antisemitic incidents in Germany with discussions, lessons on antisemitism, Jewish life in Germany and joint projects: Never again is now!

And we hope that our Israel exchange will continue in more peaceful times. It is unfortunate that the funding for school exchanges has now been drastically cut, because nothing is more peace-building and enriching than the very personal encounters between young people in their respective families, schools and everyday lives in Israel and Germany.

***Martina Kölsch** is a teacher at Paul-Klee-Gymnasium, a High School in Overath and a supervisor of the long-standing student exchange with Ironi Alef High School Tel Aviv. She has been working for three years as a German teacher at the German-Palestinian Schmidt School in Jerusalem.*

OUR WO

CENTUR

BUT SO

RESILIENT

OUR ST

UNDS ARE
ES OLD
ARE OUR
NCE AND
RENGTH



CHAPTER 2

Education and Encounter after October 7 –
Educational Activities

PART I

Educational Activities for the Preparation of a German-Israeli Youth Exchange Program

In Part I of this chapter, users find five activities to prepare for the German-Israeli youth exchange. The first three activities are designed to prepare the German group before the exchange. The activities help to talk to young people in Germany about what happened on October 7, how it affected young people in Israel (Activity I) and what the events mean for Israeli society as a whole (Activity II). In Activity III, participants work with examples of different reactions in Germany after October 7 and learn about Israeli perspectives on antisemitism. The activity “Building a Safe Space for Discourse” serves to prepare both the German and Israeli group for interactions with each other, ensuring a comfortable and secure environment throughout the exchange program. The last activity in this section is designed to prepare the Israeli group and deals with the topic of Israel-related antisemitism and how to recognize it.




WHEN THEIR WORLDS STOPPED ...

What Happened on October 7 in Israel?



60–70 minutes



 6–18 participants (please plan more time for sharing and reflection for bigger groups)
Age: 16+



- “A Timeline of Events” (see Ch. 1, pp. 23–26)
- projector, laptop(s), speakers for showing the video “Israeli Youth after October 7” (see p. 11)
- markers, moderation cards/ writing paper



Appendix

- Poster of profiles “Voices of Young People from Israel”
- Assignment for group work
- Artistic pictures after October 7
- Variation of the activity: text package “Israeli Perspectives on October 7”
- Assignment for working with the text package



[kurzelinks.de/
appendix-preparation-
activity1](https://kurzelinks.de/appendix-preparation-activity1)

OVERVIEW

This activity aims to provide participants from Germany a first introduction and context in regard to the events of October 7 in Israel. Besides coming into a conversation about the events with the use of selected artistic images, the participants engage with each other around the meaning of these events for their young peers in Israel. The video “Israeli Youth after October 7” provides an insight and serves as a basis for discussion.

OBJECTIVES

- Give an introduction about what happened on October 7
- Answer open questions and uncertainties regarding the events of October 7 in Israel
- Invite young people from Germany to reflect on the impact of the events of October 7 on young people of their age
- Strengthen young people’s connection and empathy between Germany and Israel

PROCESS

1 Introduction (15 minutes)

Tell the participants that in the next 60 minutes you will be dealing with a difficult topic involving violence, pain and terror. Encourage the participants to ask questions, but also to take a step back if it gets too much.

Hold up the printed headline of a daily newspaper from October 9th (the first working day in Germany after October 7) with the headline clearly visible to everyone and ask the group “Do you know what happened in Israel on October 7?” Write down the answers of the group in bullet points on a big flip chart. This should only be an initial collection of the current state of knowledge and should not yet lead to discussions or answering questions.

2 Group work (30 minutes)

Divide the group into small groups, each of which receives one or two artistic images from the appendix.

Assignment for the working groups

Look at the picture for a few moments. Discuss in your group the following questions:

- What do you see in the images?
- What could have happened?
- What kind of emotions are being transported through the pictures?

Come back together to the large group. Ask the participants to place their images on the floor in the circle so that they are clearly visible to everyone and to briefly share the results of the exchange. The facilitator writes down all the emotions mentioned on moderation cards (one card per emotion) and puts them next to the images.

Now summarize all the key events of October 7. Please see “The Terror Attack of October 7 – a Timeline of Events” in Chapter 1, pp. 23–27 for orientation.

3 Group work with the video “When Their Worlds Stopped ...” (20 minutes)

Come back as a group to the moderation cards on which the feelings were collected. Explain that the group will soon meet young people of our age from Israel who have gone through and are going through a very difficult time. This is the time when the video with voices of young people from Israel is being introduced to the group. Ask the group to listen carefully to what emotions (in addition to those already collected) the young people convey or mention and to write them on moderation cards and place them in the circle.

Briefly introduce the young people from the video by showing the poster in the appendix (via the projector) and explain the context of the video. Now play the video (see video link on p. 11).

Open for a final round of reflection:

- Which statement from the video stays with you?
- What feelings were mentioned by the young people?
- If you were to meet the young people, what would you ask or tell them?

Close the circle by saying that we will soon meet young people like the ones in this short movie and together think about what would help in order to create an atmosphere where everyone feels safe and welcome.



EDUCATIONAL TIP

Some of the events of the October 7 terrorist attack are very brutal, violent and involve sensitive issues such as rape and sexualized violence. When young people hear about this for the first time, it can be overwhelming or disturbing. The material in this method does not name or show any explicit details. However, participants may have already come into contact with details via social media and could share their impressions with the group. Please pay attention to the well-being of the group at all times and work with trigger warnings if necessary. You know the young people best.

Certainly, questions about the war in Gaza will come up during the workshop and that is okay. Our thoughts are with all the innocent victims. But please also make it clear that the war was a reaction to the terrorist attack and that the population in Gaza is also suffering under Hamas using civilian infrastructure, refusing to let the hostages return or surrender and threatening the Israeli population to repeat the events of October 7 again and again.

Explain that the terrorist attack on Israel on October 7 cannot be understood as a reaction to any occupation policy or as an act of liberation. Hamas is an organization whose political agenda is based on violence and terror and which denies the very right of the Israeli state to exist.



VARIATION OF THE ACTIVITY

This introduction activity can also be implemented by using a combination of the videos provided in the toolkit. In this case, the participants can work in small groups, each with a different video, and then share their impressions in the bigger group.



VARIATION OF THE ACTIVITY

For older participants or (young) professionals you can carry out this method with alternative material that conveys voices and perspectives from the broader Israeli society and the Jewish Diaspora. For this variation of the activity please use the text package “Israeli Perspectives on October 7” in the appendix.





HOW ARE YOU?

Insights into Life in Israel after October 7



80 minutes



5–15 participants
Age: 16+



- projector(s), laptop(s), speakers for showing the videos “The Israeli Society” & “The Role of Youth” (see p. 11)
- flip chart, markers and moderation cards/writing paper



Appendix

- Assignment for group work
- Poster of profiles “Voices of Young People from Israel”
- Examples of civil society projects after October 7 (overview cards)



[kurzelinks.de/
appendix-preparation-
activity2](https://kurzelinks.de/appendix-preparation-activity2)

OVERVIEW

In this activity, young people from Germany gain different insights on how young Israelis of their age perceive their society after the terrorist attacks on October 7, how they take responsibility to support their communities and how they look at the uncertain future.

The activity includes two videos with the voices of young people from Israel. Prior to the activity, it is crucial that the participants have basic knowledge on important aspects of life in Israel such as the diversity of the population, the multicultural character of the society or important milestones in the life of young people such as voluntary engagement and the military service. We recommend the facilitator to run the activity number 6 “A Day in the Life of an Israeli Youngster” beforehand from the collection of methods for the antisemitism-sensitive preparation and follow-up of German-Israeli youth exchange programs. sichtbar-handeln.org/methodensammlung/

OBJECTIVES

- Learn about the relevance of terrorist attacks around October 7 for young Israelis today
- Raise awareness about the events being still very present among Israelis and that the state of crisis continues to have an impact on people living in Israel
- Offer examples on how the Israeli civil society is coping with trauma and is organizing after the events of October 7
- Raise awareness about the uncertainty, fear and questions that young people have about the future

PROCESS

1 Introduction (15 minutes)

Open the round to ask the group how they feel today. Invite them to think for one minute and to prepare an answer that has at least two sentences. Afterwards start to ask one member of the group “How are you today?” After the person gave their answer they continue to ask someone else. This continues until everyone has had their turn.

Shortly explain that many Israelis and Jews have gotten out of the habit of asking each other “How are you?” after the terrorist attacks of October 7. The trauma is with them all the time and many are waiting for better news and better days instead.

Mention that October 7 changed Israel and that the events of the terror attack cannot simply be seen as a conflict between Israel and one of its neighboring countries. If you have not talked about the events of October 7 in Israel so far, please give an overview of the events of the terror attack by referring to the factsheet in Chapter 1, pp. 23–27 for orientation.

Take time to answer any questions that arise from the group.

2 Group work with the videos “The Israeli Society” & “The Role of Youth” (30 minutes)

Briefly introduce the young people from the videos by handing out the poster of profiles “Voices of Young People from Israel” from the appendix.

Assignment for the working groups

- Choose a young person who you want to follow during the two videos.
- Divide the characters among your group and read their short biography in the poster.
- Watch both videos “The Israeli Society” & “The Role of Youth” together (see video link on p. 11) and note down the statements that were made by the person you chose.

After the participants have watched both videos and taken notes, they can select one or more key statements from their notes to share with the group.

Ask the participants to share some key statements and discuss together:

- How are you after watching the video?
- Did you learn something new in relation to the events of October 7 and the war?
- How would you describe your young character and their feelings?
- What motivates young Israelis to become socially active for others?
- How do the young people in the videos see their future?



EDUCATIONAL TIP

If you would like to work in more detail with voices from Israel on October 7, we recommend the series of the Federal Agency for Civic Education (BpB) “**The whole picture**”, personal pictures and texts from citizens of Israel from the most diverse areas of life. The images and texts tell of the war, of life under extreme conditions, of dying and fighting, of fleeing and of solidarity: www.bpb.de/themen/naher-mittlerer-osten/das-gesamte-bild-israel [last accessed 20 March 2024]

3 Group work: What holds a society together? (30 minutes)

In this last part of the activity, the participants have the chance to get to know the Israeli society a bit better by being introduced to civic society projects which emerged after the events of October 7 in Israel. The aspect of civic society engagement opens new perspectives into the Israeli society while it also motivates the participants to think creatively on how a society can respond to a difficult crisis.

Hand out the overview cards from the appendix which present various civil society initiatives that emerged after the events of October 7 in Israel.

Divide the group into small groups of 3–4 participants and hand to each group one example of a civil society project. Let the participants talk briefly about the initiative in their card and ask each small group to present the initiative to the big group.

Now is the time for the participants to look into their own society in Germany and reflect around these questions in a group discussion:

- What is it that holds a society together?
- What kind of projects do we have in our city/neighborhood that reflect the striving for a better and more active, engaged and democratic society?
- Think of such an example, project or activity which you would like to show your Israeli friends and make suggestions on how to include this in the youth exchange program in Germany.



EDUCATIONAL TIP

After the events of October 7, many people in Germany showed their solidarity with the people of Israel. From protests on the streets and awareness posts on social media, to gathering donations for Israeli organizations or conducting activities against the rise of antisemitism in Germany, these were all examples that showed how civic society can make a change in times of crisis. Encourage the participants in the group to think also of such projects or activities which they could include in the program and which they would like to show the Israeli participants when they visit Germany.



THE FEELING OF ISOLATION

Views on Antisemitism in Germany from an Israeli Perspective



90 minutes



6–15 participants
Age: 16+



- projector, laptop(s), speakers for showing the video “Antisemitism after October 7” (see p. 11)
- markers, moderation cards/ writing paper, flip chart paper



Appendix

- Assignment for group work
- 3 work packages
- Poster of profiles “Voices of Young People from Israel”



[kurzelinks.de/
appendix-preparation-
activity3](https://kurzelinks.de/appendix-preparation-activity3)

OVERVIEW

This activity aims to explain to young people in Germany how (young) people from Israel feel in the light of antisemitic acts of violence or calls for the destruction of Israel in Europe and other parts of the world. In preparation for a youth exchange program, participants from Germany are invited to reflect on the reactions to October 7 in Germany and to find out together what antisemitic statements and actions do to those affected.

The method is intended as a deepening of the Activity I “When Their Worlds Stopped”. It can also be used without this introductory method if the young people from Germany have already dealt with the events of October 7 in Israel in greater depth.

Participants should know roughly what antisemitism is or have heard of it before.

OBJECTIVES

- Offer an overview of reactions in Germany to October 7
- Raise awareness about the new forms of antisemitism in the light of the events after October 7
- Turn the focus to what antisemitic statements and actions do to young people who are directly affected by October 7
- Think together about possible reactions to antisemitic expressions



EDUCATIONAL TIP

Before carrying out this method, the group should have a basic knowledge of what is antisemitism. This method essentially deals with reactions to October 7 and does not deal with definitions, or different forms of antisemitism. The focus in this method is more on how people who are affected by antisemitism feel.

To address antisemitism in the preparation and follow-up of a youth exchange, we highly recommend one or more workshops from the collection of methods for antisemitism-sensitive preparation and follow-up of youth exchanges: sichtbar-handeln.org/methodensammlung/

PROCESS

1 Introduction (15 minutes)

Place two cards stating “Yes” and “No” in two opposite parts of the room. Start the activity by asking the participants to position themselves on each side of the room according to what they believe regarding the following statements. The closer they stand to the middle of the room, the more ambivalent or unsure they are about the statements. It is important to say beforehand that this positioning is not about right or wrong.

Statements

- ⌘ Reactions of solidarity towards Israel were expressed all over Germany after October 7.
- ⌘ Antisemitism has risen in Germany since the events of October 7.
- ⌘ The events of October 7 in Israel have an impact on Jewish people in Germany and other places of the world.

- ∴ I have encountered a case where a Jewish person was attacked after the events of October 7.
- ∴ I have encountered a case where someone said something antisemitic in the aftermath of the events of October 7.
- ∴ If I were Jewish I would express and live my identity openly in Germany.

After each statement wait for a moment until every participant has positioned themselves in the room. Ask a couple of participants after each statement if they wish to say something about why they are standing there. The participants should not feel obliged to say something but they are encouraged to do so.

2 Group work (60 minutes)

Prepare three tables that are distributed around the room. Then distribute the three different work packages among the tables so that each table has a different work package. Also place a flip chart paper and markers on each table.

Divide the group into three small groups and explain the following task to the participants. Each group will start at one table. The group is asked to look at the material they find on their table, exchange with each other about it and make some notes from their discussion on the flip chart. After 15 minutes, the groups are asked to move clockwise to the next table and work with the material they find there. They can comment or add something on the existing flip chart. After 15 minutes they are asked to move on once again.

Assignment for the working groups

Read through the material on the table or listen to the speech.

- What is being said? What are the main statements or messages?
- What kind of reaction to the events of October 7 does this material stand for? Is it a negative or a positive one?
- What are your thoughts on this? Would you add anything to it?

After 45 minutes come together in the large group again. Please ask every group to present the flip chart from the last table they worked at and to sum up the discussion. Then summarize the group work and wrap-up the presentation asking following questions:

- Was there something which was new or surprising to you? Was there something that moved you or irritated you?
- What arguments against antisemitism are being mentioned in the materials?
- Is there a way to react when Jewish people are being subjected to hatred and violence?
- Do you think that the reactions in Germany have an impact on young people in Israel, too?



IMPORTANT

Concluding the presentation of the materials, it is important to note that both a) expressions of support with the victims of the Hamas terror attack and b) antisemitic statements and actions came and can come from different parts of the German society, both from the majority society and from minorities, too.

3

Group discussion around the video “Antisemitism after October 7” (15 minutes)

Briefly introduce the young people from the video by showing the poster in the appendix. Now, play the video where young people from Israel talk about antisemitism (see video link on p. 11).

Open for a final round of reflection:

- Which statement from the video stays with you?
- What feelings were mentioned by the young people?
- Can you think of something to show your support for them?

Collect the answers to the third question on a flip chart. Encourage the participants to really think what each of them can do to show their support to people affected by antisemitism these days. If they cannot think of anything, give them suggestions, for example:

- ∴ **Message of solidarity:** Write an email to the Israeli partners/ young people from the video (individually or as a group) and send it to info@conact-org.de
From there it will be forwarded to the young people in Israel.
- ∴ **Power of social media:** Follow someone who has been active since October 7 or share an awareness post on your wall.
- ∴ **Write a statement against antisemitism together and share it on social media.**
- ∴ **Organize an event to show support or to collect money for an organization in Israel that helps those who suffer from the events. (e. g. a bake sale, a concert)**

Encourage the participants to not just think theoretically about actions of support but to pick one of the ideas and realize it.



VARIATION OF THE ACTIVITY

Many (young) people in Germany have been active in the discourse around the events of October 7 and its aftermath in their own social media channels. You can variate this activity by asking the participants to use material from their own or other people's social media for the working session (step 2). For inspiration, please also take a look at the list of links in Chapter 3 of this toolkit.



BUILDING A SAFE SPACE FOR DISCOURSE



75 minutes



6–18 participants
Age: 16+



- markers and moderation cards/
writing paper
- pictures of places or activities
which will take place during the
exchange program

OVERVIEW

The intercultural and international encounter is the very heart of an exchange experience. Some of it takes place during the instructive activities and the formal setting of the exchange program. Yet, important experiences take place in the “informal” space – on the bus, in between sites, at the host families and during meals.

This activity is intended to be held as part of the preparations for meeting in either Israel or Germany; and so, it should be adapted accordingly.

Preparing for intercultural meetings is always a necessity. But after October 7, the facilitators of encounter programs need to pay particular attention so that the participants from both countries engage in a manner that allows everyone to feel comfortable and protected.

OBJECTIVES

- Converse around questions preoccupying Israel and Germany – each about the other – before the meeting
- Be aware about the “new” or specific sensitivities that have developed in each of the societies following October 7
- Reflect on how to ask questions in a sensitive and empathetic way
- Strengthen the ability to consider the situation from the “other’s” point of view



EDUCATIONAL TIP

The facilitators should be prepared in advance and be able to provide answers around these questions:

- Who is going to be part of this encounter?
- What do we assume about them?
- What do we know about them?
- What are we going to see during the encounter program?
- What are we particularly interested in and what is likely to interest the group we are meeting?

PROCESS

1 Introduction (20 minutes)

Tell the group that we are about to fly to Israel/Germany. Tell them to imagine that we are leaving the airport, boarding the plane and approaching the other country – what can we see from the window? What does it look like outside in the other country?

As you collect the group’s answers, it is important to let everyone of them express whatever intuitively comes to mind, even if it is funny or unrealistic.

Place some photos in the middle of the room showing places and topics that are scheduled to be included in the encounter program.

Ask the group to come up with questions that occur to them regarding planned activities and visits in the other country. Write the questions down on a board so all the members can see it. At this point try to refrain from discussions around logistic aspects of the planned activities and rather focus on questions in regard to new, unknown or complex things in the other country.

2 Group work (15 minutes)

Ask the group to come up with all the questions that we predict that the other group will want to know about us – in relation to any realm or subject. Write the members' answers on a separate board.

Ask the group to look at all the questions and mark which of them might be difficult, challenging or even insensitive for the other group.

**IMPORTANT**

At this point the aim is to strengthen the participants ability to step into the other group's shoes, and to objectively analyze the curiosity we have expressed about them. The facilitator should make sure that the questions are formulated in a clear way and should react in an appropriate manner in case that "facts" and perceptions that the members may have regarding the other country may not necessarily correspond with the reality.

3 Group discussion (30 minutes)

In the second stage, ask the group to choose two questions out of the ones that they thought the other group would want to ask them: One that they themselves would be happy to answer, and one that they would not.

Go around the group and listen to everyone's answers regarding the two questions.

It is important to let the members try to explain how they feel, while also being attentive to the fact that different participants may have different feelings about the same question.

4 Closing discussion (15 minutes)

In this stage it is important to mention to the group again that that encounter programs between Germany and Israel take place in the aftermath of very difficult and even traumatizing events for the Israeli society. The implications of these events left a mark also on the German society. Next to the rise of anti-semitism, polarizing debates took place also in regard to the resulting war in Gaza and to Israel's history in the region.

Now go back to the first round of questions regarding the other country and take a look at the formulated questions. Discuss with the group around these questions:

- Have I formulated my questions about the other country in a kind and empathetic way?
- Do my questions open room for discussion or do they rather close it?
- Would I ask something differently now?

Remind the group that the central principle in an exchange program is getting to know somebody different from us, in culture and in mentality. We therefore need to come to the exchange with an intentionally open and curious mind, at the same time showing sensitivity towards what might be embarrassing, offensive or aggravating to the other side while we are getting to know one another.

Emphasize to the group that this is not meant to be a formula for what is allowed and what is forbidden. The only test they need for what is okay to say or ask is simply trying to put themselves in the other side's shoes and trying to imagine how their words might be received. Even if they get it wrong, it is important to take responsibility, give clarification and apologize when necessary.






NOT EVERYTHING IS ANTISEMITISM, BUT HOW CAN WE TELL?



90–120 minutes




6–18 participants
Age: 17+



moderation cards,
markers and flip chart



Appendix:

- Definitions for the concepts of antisemitism, xenophobia and racism (for the facilitator's preparation)
- Assignment for group work



[kurzelinks.de/
appendix-preparation-
activity5](https://kurzelinks.de/appendix-preparation-activity5)

OVERVIEW

October 7 and the resulting war launched a new wave of hatred towards Jews and Israelis throughout the world. In many senses, Israelis feel attacked for no justified reason, and feel that the global opinion does not understand their position and is not fair-minded. Emotions like these are likely to run even stronger at any bilateral meeting these days. But what must be grasped is that not every statement directed toward Israel, or every question asked during such meetings, fundamentally “rests” on antisemitic or anti-Israel motives.

When a question is asked or criticism is expressed, how can we tell if it belongs to overall differences in culture and worldview, and or if it derives from an essentially antisemitic stance toward Jews or Israel? This issue lies at the core of this activity.

OBJECTIVES

- Provide the participants with tools to identify antisemitism in the 21st century in general, and especially in the context of October 7
- Help the participants develop the necessary tolerance and authentic listening skills that facilitate meetings and discussion even when that means facing difficult questions or claims that may be directed against them
- Instill a sense of confidence in the Israeli group prior to the meetings and discussions with the German group, to establish a safe space and decrease the natural defensive emotions bound to arise in this time



EDUCATIONAL TIP

Prior to holding this activity, it is recommended to be familiar with the terms antisemitism, racism and xenophobia, as well as the difference between them.

A conversation about the “new antisemitism” – antisemitic expressions formulated as alleged criticism towards the State of Israel – is recommended prior to this activity. The brief material “**Anti-Semitism and the Situation in the Middle East**” (Teaching Aid, PDF) can be used for orientation and preparation for the educators or older participants around this topic. Link to PDF: www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/2/441137.pdf [last accessed 20 March 2024]

Before holding this activity, it is recommended that the facilitators review and collect as many relevant examples as possible from current events for their own preparation. Because interpreting statements made about Israel is a central part of the activity, the participants should be encouraged to give as much context as possible when talking about the gathered examples.



IMPORTANT

There is no doubt that antisemitism in the 21st century takes on many and varied forms. Although it may be difficult at times, we have to start out with the assumption that our peers from Germany who are meeting us know very well that they are meeting Israelis and Jews; so they would not choose to participate in the meeting if they had any overt feelings of antisemitism. This is not to say that none of them latently possess any “leftover” or actual ideas grounded on antisemitism, but we must remember that the reason behind a youth exchange is exactly to get to know each other, each other’s lives and complex realities questioning stereotypes and black and white pictures of each other.

PROCESS

1 Introduction: What is antisemitism? (20 minutes)

Start by asking the participants to suggest ways of explaining antisemitism. Compile everyone’s answers and write them on the board – in the form of a wheel of associations.

In this session it is recommended to distinguish between antisemitism and racism. Unlike racist or xenophobic stereotypes, which suggest that their subjects are inferior, antisemitic stereotypes are based on the presumption that their objects are in a position of power which they use for harmful purposes.

2 Group work: criticism or antisemitism? (45 minutes)

Ask the participants :

- Have you recently been exposed to instances of antisemitism, either online or in news stories or personally? If so, describe for the group what you read or saw.

Write the examples on the board (either by name or short titles), while dividing them into three different categories, as per the following table.

Please note: At this stage, do not write down the titles of the categories, so the participants simply see three different columns of examples for now.

The categories:

Statements, deeds or generalizations that stigmatize or harm Jews or Israelis

Statements or deeds that criticize the Israeli government or express an ideological opinion regarding the Middle East conflict.

Unclear

Now, after collecting the examples from the group, reveal the names of the above categories to the group, and explain what stands behind each category.

Following examples can be helpful for orientation:

- ❖ The slogan “From the river to the sea ...” – is antisemitic because it suggests that the entire area from the Jordan river to the Mediterranean Sea should belong to a potential Palestinian state, disregarding the fact that Israel exists within that territory.
- ❖ The statement “Israelis murder children in Gaza” – is an antisemitic expression because it claims that Israel is deliberately killing children, which besides being untrue, it delegitimizes the Israeli state.
- ❖ “The Israeli government commits crimes against humanity” – is obviously not favorable and does not necessarily reflect truth and reality but it is not an antisemitic thing to say.

- ∴ “All the occupied territories in Israel need to be withdrawn from” – is an ideological political position but not an antisemitic position.
- ∴ “Israel is an apartheid state” – is antisemitic as it is not only a false statement but it also demonizes the Israeli state, accusing it of structural and legal separation between Jews and Arabs. Israel is a diverse, multicultural state that grants equal rights to all its citizens.

Ask the group:

- Do you accept and agree with the division into the categories that is shown on the board?
- Now that you understand each category a little better, do you think any examples have been put in the wrong category?



IMPORTANT

Please take note – this part is the very heart of the discussion and the activity. It is therefore vital to be receptive to the participants’ thoughts and comments and encourage as much discussion as possible.

It is important to remember that in some cases it is difficult to identify the “right category,” so in those cases we have to emphasize the need to listen and ask clarifying questions of the other side – to understand whether, perhaps, such statements create discomfort but are not necessarily antisemitic.

3 Group work: How do I respond if they tell me ...? (30 minutes)

An important part of instilling confidence and a sense of being capable of handling questions and criticism concerning what is now happening between Israel and Palestine can be achieved by doing advance simulations and practicing coping with questions that we think are liable to come up in the meeting.

The goal here is not to have the group prepare or memorize agreed-upon or official answers, but rather to provide the members with the confidence to take on a wide range of questions as they come up.

Spread questions and statements that could be raised during a youth exchange program in connection with the conflict, the war and October 7.

The more questions we can collect ahead of time, even including some from our German partner, the more suitable the preparation.

Divide the group into smaller groups of three; then have each trio select a question/ statement and give them the following assignment:

Assignment for the working groups

Read your statement and discuss in your group:

- What category does it belong to?
- What questions could you ask the other side, in order to clarify its source?
- What responses might you have?

Gather everyone in plenum and ask each trio to briefly present their insights.

It would be highly worthwhile to compile from this session a list of questions/ statements and possible answers that the group can make use of before the delegation meetings.

4 Closing the activity: a perspective from Germany (10 minutes)

A meaningful part of our ability to correctly understand the discourse will be learning about the mindset in German society. From the first day of the events, on October 7, the German government squarely and absolutely positioned itself in support of Israel. It has also continued to do so and takes firm action against manifestations of antisemitism or violence toward Jews or Israelis in Germany.

The following statement from German vice-chancellor Robert Habeck can give a meaningful context to participants from Israel about the discourse around this topic in Germany:



YouTube link: “Robert Habeck on Israel and Antisemitism”:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=MdZvkkpJaVI
[last accessed 20 March 2024]

PART II

Educational Activities in the Course of a German-Israeli Youth Exchange Program

The activities in this part of the toolkit are designed to help address the events of October 7 during the encounter. The first activity goes back to October 7 and encourages the participants from Germany and Israel to speak to one another about the events and what they personally mean for them. Activity II addresses the challenges and pitfalls of social media with regard to the war between Israel and Hamas and supplies young participants with tools to verify information on social media. Recognizing the importance of resilience in the face of such traumatic events, Activity III “Our Alphabet of Resilience” encourages participants to reflect on what resilience means to them and how they have individually coped with adversity in their past. The last pages of this chapter are dedicated to the topic of commemorating the victims of October 7. It is suggested to incorporate a shared moment of remembrance following discussions about the tragic events during the youth exchange, serving as a poignant closing activity.



OCTOBER 7 AND US

Being Young Amidst This War



60 minutes



6–18 participants
Age: 16+



- projector, laptop(s), speakers for showing the video “Being Young Amidst This War” (see p. 11)
- markers and moderation cards/writing paper



Appendix:

- Poster of profiles “Voices of Young People from Israel”
- Assignment for group work



[kurzelinks.de/
appendix-encounter-
activity1](https://kurzelinks.de/appendix-encounter-activity1)

OVERVIEW

This activity invites the participants from Germany and Israel to speak about their feelings and perspectives on the events of October 7. The video “Being young amidst this war” provides insights on how the events impacted young peoples’ lives in Israel and serves as a basis for discussion. The activity aims at opening a room to talk about the events – together, but from different perspectives.

OBJECTIVES

- Invite young people from both countries to speak about their feelings and perspectives on the events of October 7
- Create a common ground of knowledge on how the events of October 7 impacted young peoples’ lives in Israel
- Address the fact that the experiences, memories and perspectives on the events of October 7 are very different in Germany and Israel and enable an exchange on that



EDUCATIONAL TIP

This activity builds on the introduction method “When Their Worlds Stopped ...” from Chapter 2, Part I on preparation sessions for participants from Germany. Therefore, it is very important not to conduct this activity without the recommended introduction method. In case that the introduction method “When Their Worlds Stopped ...” was not included in the preparation session, it is important to do so during the youth exchange program. In this case, please plan enough time for both methods.

PROCESS

1 Group work with the video “Being Young Amidst This War” (20 minutes)

Tell the participants that in the next 60 minutes you will be dealing with a difficult topic involving violence, pain and terror. Encourage the participants to ask questions, but also to take a step back if it gets too much.

Divide the group into their national groups and send them to separate rooms with a group facilitator. Each group will be watching the video “Being Young Amidst This War” (see video link on p. 11).

After watching the video, each group separately is invited to speak about what they have seen and heard. Following questions can help facilitate the discussion:

Guiding questions for the participants from Israel:

- How do you feel after watching the video?
- Does the video represent your perspective on October 7 and the war?
- How would you describe the impact this event had on you?
Is anything missing that is important to you?
- Which feelings were mentioned in the video? Can you relate?
- How do you feel talking to the German group about this video?

Guiding questions for the participants from Germany:

- How do you feel after watching the video?
- Was there something that was new to you?
- Was there something that moved you or that you can identify with?
- Which statements touched you or stuck with you the most?
- How do you feel about talking to the Israeli group about the video?

Variation of the first step: If you have the feeling that there is a good sense of connection and trust between the participants, you can variate this activity by watching the video together with the whole group. After watching the video, invite first the Israeli participants to share their thoughts on the video (using the questions above). Then invite the German participants to say what is on their mind after seeing the video.

2 Group discussion (20 minutes)

The whole group comes together again. Divide the group into small bilateral groups (mixed Israeli-German). If you feel that the participants could need a more intimate atmosphere to discuss, please divide the group only in (mixed) couples. Each mixed group or couple gets two to four different statements from the video. The small groups or couples are invited to talk about those statements and voice their feelings and perspectives around it.

Statements

- ⚡ “I think I lost some sense of trust in the world.”
- ⚡ “All our future ... we don't know if we are going to live here in the future, we don't know what the country will look like in 5 months even. It's very hard to live like that ... with not knowing what is going to happen.”
- ⚡ “It's hard to see that your parents are afraid ... when you never see them afraid of anything. It's hard as a child to see your parents that they don't want you to go out of the house or don't want you to drive far away just because of what will happen to me ... especially as a girl.”
- ⚡ “There is this sense of overwhelming grief that touches everyone and it weighs down on people in their day-to-day life.”

Following questions can be addressed in the small group/between the couples:

Assignment for the working groups

- How do you feel about this statement?
- Do you agree? Does it represent your perspective or not?
- Do you understand why the person behind the statement feels that way?



EDUCATIONAL TIP

Point out and encourage the participants from Germany to have an sympathetic ear and to not over-dominate the discussion in the bilateral groups. This does not mean that they are not supposed to contribute to the conversation, but it rather refers to the fact that the realities described in the videos relate to life in Israel. This is now the moment to pay attention to how the participants from Israel feel.

3 Closing discussion (20 minutes)

Ask everyone to come together again. Invite the groups/couples to share some of their discussion. Finally, address the fact that the experiences, memories and perspectives on the events of October 7 can be very different in Germany and Israel. Try to discuss how they feel about these differences.

- Were your perspectives or opinions about the statements alike or different?
- How do you feel about the fact that the experiences, memories and perspectives on the events of October 7 are very different in Germany and Israel?
- What are the feelings or values that we all share?
- If there was a message you could send to the young people speaking in the video, what would that message be?



SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 7



100 minutes



6–18 participants
Age: 14+



Projector, laptop(s), speakers for showing the video “The Role of Social Media” (see p. 11)



Appendix:

- Poster of profiles “Voices of Young People from Israel”
- Assignment for group work
- Examples from social media posts
- Background information for the examples
- List of useful links for fact-checking



[kurzelinks.de/
appendix-encounter-
activity2](https://kurzelinks.de/appendix-encounter-activity2)

OVERVIEW

Almost every teenager uses social media platforms intensively on a daily basis. While they are used for entertainment and also provide useful content, problematic aspects around social media should be mentioned, too. Disinformation, fake news, propaganda and images of violence are spreading unchecked. Algorithms promote content that is controversial and emotionalizing. These dynamics were also apparent in the context of October 7 and the Israeli army’s war against Hamas. This method helps young people to critically examine their own social media use, become aware of the challenges posed by fake news and use tools to check content.

OBJECTIVES

- Raise awareness on the subject of fake news
- Provide proper tools for use on social networks
- Reflect on the consequences of fake news and disinformation for individuals and democratic societies

PROCESS

1 Group thermometer (15 minutes)

The participants stand in a row. Every time the facilitator reads out a sentence, everyone who agrees with the sentence takes one step forward. The sentences are to be read in the order they appear below, since they “escalate” in intensity. You can pause when asking further questions.

- ⚡ I have an active profile on Instagram/TikTok/X.
- ⚡ I post on a daily basis.
- ⚡ I have argued on social media with people who have different opinions from me.
— What was the argument about? How did it end?
- ⚡ I have tried trends that I saw on social media.
— What trends have you tried? Why did you try them?
- ⚡ I follow celebrities on social media.
— Who do you follow?
- ⚡ I follow political figures on social media (this can be at the national level, or even municipal or local, and can include influencers who comment on political affairs).
— Who do you follow? What content do they share?
- ⚡ Sometimes I reshare other people’s content.
- ⚡ I fact-check content before posting it.
- ⚡ I too believed fake news that I read/saw on social media.
- ⚡ I too have posted something and regretted it later.
- ⚡ I too have shared something that turned out not to be true.

2 Group discussion on the video “The Role of Social Media” (25 minutes)

Briefly introduce the young people from the video “The Role of Social Media” by showing the poster of profiles “Voices of Young People from Israel” in the appendix. Play the video (see link on p. 11) and have a preliminary discussion about social media, first in general and then by getting more specific in the context of October 7:

- Where do you get the information that you consume?
- How do you know if the information that you consume is reliable?
- What are the dangers of consuming fake news?
- What are the effects of fake news on affected people such as the young people in the video?
- What can we do better to avoid the problems described?

Now focus the discussion among the participants around information and news about October 7:

- How did you hear about October 7?
- Do you keep informing yourself about the events? On which platform?
- What headlines do you particularly remember from wartime?
- Have you experienced fake news or deepfakes on social media?

3 Group work: fact of fiction? (50 minutes)

Show the social media posts and headlines from the appendix. For each one, the group tries to guess: Is this fact or fiction, did it happen or not? The group should decide quickly and spontaneously since users spend only a few seconds viewing a specific content in their feed. (5 minutes)

Ask the group: Do you know how to verify news or to check for fake news? Write down the answers on a flip chart and make sure to mention the following tips (10 minutes):

- Try to always keep an open eye on what you consume online.
- Glance through the user's feed: Look at their photo gallery, read the "About" and try to find out if they have any reason to spread fake news.
- Read the comments on the post: If a large number of users argue with the author and even post articles and proof of the content being untrue, it might not be true.
- Community notes on X (previously Twitter) can add useful context. You often find information about false contexts, false claims or fake pictures. communitynotes.x.com/guide/en/about/introduction
- Does a certain image look unreliable? Right-click on it and type "Search photo with Google" or use Google Lens. All the sources of the photo will appear, or else similar photos (which might include an original that was doctored). support.google.com/websearch/answer/1325808?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform%3DAndroid

Split the group into groups of three participants. Each group has 10 minutes to work on one or more of the aforementioned examples and receives the following task:

Assignment for the working groups

Look at your example and:

- Find out if the image/post/headline is correct.
- Is something false or fake?
- Use the tips and tools we just mentioned.

Come back and share the results. Let the participants show what they could find and let them explain how they did it.

- Was it hard to find out if it is fact or fiction?
- How did you manage to find more background information?

Let the participants use functions like screen sharing or let them show on a device that is connected to the screen/a projector. After each example, show the materials from the appendix “Background” and share the information noted there. (25 minutes)

4 Closing discussion (10 minutes)

Wrap up the activity by referring to following points around the usage of content on social media:

- ∴ **Many photos and videos on social media and news show the cruel reality of war. Nevertheless, deepfakes, propaganda, images from other conflicts, fake news and misrepresentations and even clips from movies or video games circulate especially on social media.**
- ∴ **They are used to support a certain narrative.**
- ∴ **Deep fake pictures and especially pictures showing children trigger strong emotions and receive many clicks. Social media algorithms boost this effect.**
- ∴ **Fact-checking websites and image search help to find information and to identify fakes or photos from other contexts.**
- ∴ **Even reliable news media sometimes make mistakes, but they correct them afterwards. It is important to check information on social media with information from reliable journalists, news outlets and news media.**

End the activity by saying that we will soon meet young people like the ones in the short video “The Role of Social Media”. These young people are traumatized not only by the events of October 7, but also by disinformation and antisemitism on social media. Therefore, it is important to show that we are aware of the dynamics of social media and the effect they have on Israeli youth.

CONCLUDING TASKS – SUGGESTION FOR ADVANCED GROUPS

Create short informational videos during the visits in Israel and Germany, showing real situations and not fake news. We recommend orientating the videos along the lines of “What I learned today” as part of the delegation, educational content that we studied, questions for discussion (“Take a moment to consider this ...”). The videos produced by the groups can be shown in plenum (a “movie night” can be arranged for the end of the delegation). They should be watched with a critical eye, based on everything learned during the exchange visit/s.



OUR ALPHABET OF RESILIENCE



90 minutes



6–18 participants
Age: 16+



Markers and moderation cards/
writing paper, flip chart paper



Appendix:

- Assignment for group work



[kurzelinks.de/
appendix-encounter-
activity3](https://kurzelinks.de/appendix-encounter-activity3)

OVERVIEW

This activity encourages the participants from Germany and Israel to explore and express their experiences, emotions and coping mechanisms related to resilience after a traumatic or challenging event. Through the creation of a lexicon, the participants create a language around resilience in the face of adversity through a creative process.

OBJECTIVES

- Reflect on experiences and emotions around challenging events
- Talk about different ways and factors that strengthen resilience
- Work with each other in a creative way that fosters engagement and confidence
- Reinforce the group feeling among the group members



EDUCATIONAL TIP

The experiences of the young people from Germany and Israel are quite different at this moment. Many youngsters in Israel are directly affected by the events of October 7 and naturally they might refer to these events during this activity. While participants from Germany are not affected by these events (in the same way), they too might have experiences about particularly challenging moments in life and can contribute to the discussion around factors of resilience. Encourage the participants to have an open ear about each other's experiences and avoid comparisons regarding the severity of each experience.

PROCESS

1 Introduction (10 minutes)

Start this activity by introducing the topic of resilience with a few opening questions:

- How do you understand the word “resilience”?
- Why is resilience important in navigating challenging events in life?

Following definition on resilience can serve for orientation for the participants:



Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. A number of factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, including the ways in which individuals view and engage with the world, the availability and quality of social resources, and specific coping strategies. Psychological research demonstrates that the resources and skills associated with resilience can be cultivated and practiced.

American Psychological Association www.apa.org [last accessed 20 March 2024]



2 Sharing in couples (15 minutes)

Ask the participants to come together in couples for 10 minutes and give them the following work assignment:

Assignment for the working groups

Think for a moment (each one of you individually) of a recent challenge you faced. Then share with your partner and discuss the following questions:

- What was particularly challenging about this event?
- How did you bounce back from that experience?
- What inner strength, coping mechanism or strategy helped you find ways to face this challenging situation?
- Where did you learn this skill/coping mechanism in life?
- If you could name this inner strength, coping mechanism or strategy with one word, what would it be?

3 Group work: our “Alphabet of Resilience” (40 minutes)

Come back to the big group and ask each pair to introduce their partner and share a brief summary of their partner’s story, naming in the end the one word which characterizes the way they showed resilience in these events.



IMPORTANT

It is up to each participant if they want to share their story in the big circle. In some cases, sharing the central word/term in regard to resilience might be enough.

The facilitator puts up the word visibly on a large board and marks the first letter of the word – so that the participants can later on list the words/terms alphabetically.

For example:

- ⚡ **Community** is everything to me. The strong ties between my friends group showed that we can be there for each other when needed.”
- ⚡ “I was alone during these challenging events and I had to find my inner strength within me. I have been practicing **mindfulness** and **meditation** in the past and this was a skill I could use in times of crisis.”
- ⚡ “I am active on **social media**. Being vocal about my experience there and asking other people to participate gave me a sense of agency.”

By the end of the group session, the participants should have a board full of terms, concepts and notions which represent the way they showed resilience during challenging events.

Ask the participants to list the terms alphabetically and if needed, add one or two sentences under each word in order to give some context (see examples above). This board will be now the group's "Alphabet of Resilience". It is okay, if there is more than one term under each letter of the alphabet and if not all letters of the alphabet are represented with a word.

Give room for questions and make sure that all participants understand the terms which were introduced in this part of the activity. Conclude this step with a few reflection questions:

- Was there something new for you here?
- Did you learn about a new way/tool/coping mechanism which you can practice and which might help you navigate a challenging moment in life?

4 Creative session (30 minutes)

Explain to the participants that resilience is a concept which has been central for the educational work with young people after October 7. It is important to mention here that resilience is not something that you can learn when a crisis begins. Resilience is not something that emerges by the challenge or by the event itself. It is rather an effect of strong social ties among a community, shared values and a sense of belonging that are cultivated for a long time. At a time of crisis resilience emerges as a strength and skill for individuals or communities to cope with that crisis.

At the same time, the Israeli society showed an impressive sense of resilience after October 7 in form of civic engagement, participation in community activities and raising awareness about the events with other people worldwide.

Now ask the participants to think of an activity which they can perform together – as a whole or in smaller groups – in order to not only strengthen the group feeling among each other but also to offer young people in Israel something which will help them feel supported and connected to young people in Germany.

The group can take inspiration from the notions in the “Alphabet of Resilience” and create a little project that is meaningful to them. If the activity or project needs time to plan, they can choose to integrate it as part of their youth exchange program in the following days.

Following examples can be given to the group(s) for orientation and inspiration:

- ❖ **Create a hashtag for social media together to raise awareness about the Israeli society after October 7**
- ❖ **Write a poem, a creative text or a song together to show the connectedness between young people in Germany and Israel**
- ❖ **Draw or create an art piece together**
- ❖ **Organize a small donation campaign to support a group of their choice in Israel**
- ❖ **Organize an activity in the nature such as planting a tree to commemorate someone affected by October 7**
- ❖ **Etc.**

In Chapter 3 (from p. 96) you can find material – such as suggestions for songs, testimonies, artwork created after October 7 – that the groups can use for their activities.



VARIATION OF THE ACTIVITY

The video “The Role of Youth” (see video link on p. 11) which has been suggested in Activity II of Part I (Preparation) “How Are You ... Insights into Life in Israel after October 7” could serve as a good introduction prior to step no. 4 in this activity. We recommend to use this video here, if Activity II was not part of the preparation session for the German group.



COMMEMORATING OCTOBER 7 IN A BILATERAL GROUP

The attack by Hamas on October 7 stands as an unprecedented act of terrorism in the history of the State of Israel. It is considered the event in which the most Jews were killed in a single day since the Holocaust. As these lines are being written, Israeli society is still in the midst of the event, the war is yet to come to an end, many of the abducted civilians and soldiers have not yet returned and tens of thousands of people are still displaced in their own country and do not know when they will return home, if at all.

On March 17, 2024, the Israeli government passed the Memorial Day Law for the events of October 7, designating an official Memorial Day each year on the Jewish calendar date of 24 Tishrei, during which official ceremonies will commemorate the civilians killed and the soldiers who fought and fell on that day. The choice to mark this Memorial Day on a different date than the general “Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of the Wars and Victims of Actions of Terrorism” (Yom Hazikaron) emphasizes how extraordinary this event is in its scale and significance for Israeli society.

In the aftermath of the horrific events, numerous references have been drawn upon, including terms from the Holocaust era and visual representations, suggesting a connection between these events and the atrocities of the Holocaust.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT HAPPENED

These comparisons have been expressed in various ways; whether it is in the depiction of the horrors endured by the survivors, in social media narratives, in press coverage, or in the rhetoric of public figures and politicians. Additionally, many Holocaust survivors also testify that the loss of loved ones, the images, the voices, and the stories surrounding October 7 evoke difficult memories from their own experiences during the Holocaust.

The perception of similarities emerges from several reasons, including extreme and appalling violence, a sense of helplessness, acts of abduction, dire situations like seeking refuge and hiding, calls for help that went unanswered, and hatred based on murderous ideology. Moreover, following the terrible massacre, there has been a worrying increase in antisemitism worldwide, violent attacks targeting Jews and Jewish institutions, and a sharp sense of insecurity among Jewish communities worldwide.

While there are certain parallels to the Holocaust era, particularly in terms of the individual experiences of the victims, it is important to acknowledge that the events of October 7 differ in numerous ways, which will not be delved into at this moment. Nevertheless, these perceptions testify to the extensive and profound presence of Holocaust memory in Israeli consciousness and public discourse.

FINDING WAYS OF REMEMBERING

While the discussion on how to properly commemorate the event and pay tribute to the victims is just beginning, efforts to remember and honor them are already emerging. Spontaneous memorials set up by families, friends, and various initiatives, along with the creation of songs, poetry, artworks, and other forms of expression, are shaping the memory and commemoration of these events.

In addition to coping with the events and the trauma, as well as understanding their significance for the participants in exchange programs, we believe it is important to dedicate time and space for a moment of remembering together. This will allow participants to honor the events of October 7 and the individuals who were affected by them.

After conducting one or two of the suggested activities on October 7 as a bilateral group, we consider it essential to bring the day's events to a close with a shared moment of remembrance.

A moment of remembrance is a pinnacle moment in the bilateral encounter and the engagement with the subject and we see great importance in it. Creating a shared moment of remembrance allows participants in the bilateral group to collectively create a space for gathering, support, emotions and reflection. This moment serves to honor the victims, hostages, and the families and communities who lost their homes and loved ones. Additionally, it offers a moment to absorb and reflect on the content covered beforehand.


For the creation of a shared moment of remembrance we recommend the following:

ACTIVITY ON A SHARED MOMENT OF REMEMBRANCE

Offer the group one hour to collaboratively prepare and shape the framework which will allow them to choose their preferred activity for a shared moment of remembrance. Texts, songs, poems and testimonies can be found in the following Chapter 3. As they create and develop this moment of remembering, we suggest addressing questions such as:

- How can we appropriately remember and honor October 7?
- How can we commemorate the victims in a dignified manner, together with (young) people from Germany and Israel?
- How can we establish shared reference points between the event on October 7 and its present-day significance?
- What messages and values do we want to convey during the memorial ceremony?

Participants can be presented with the following ideas for inspiration:

- ⌘ [Read out the Memorial Prayer \(Yizkor\) together](https://vimeo.com/911552128) 
vimeo.com/911552128
- ⌘ Read out one or two testimonies from October 7
- ⌘ Read out one of the recommended poems
- ⌘ Light a candle for those affected by October 7
- ⌘ Listen together to one of the suggested songs
- ⌘ Create a memorial wall with pictures, notes or mementos in memory of the victims
- ⌘ Keep a minute of silence

A variety of testimonies, songs, poems and further material is all accessible in Chapter 3, p. 96–109.

Memorial Prayer – Yizkor

**We remember those murdered on the Black Shabbat of 2023.
At the same time, we choose life wholeheartedly | Shitim Institute**

May the people of Israel remember the pure souls of their sons and daughters, the loyal and brave, the people of labor and peace, who fell victims to the Black Shabbat massacre, 2023.

We remember the women and men who were murdered in their homes, Kibbutzim, Moshavim and towns in the Gaza Envelope, that were breached and conquered by a cruel, merciless enemy.

We remember the mother who grips the handle of the iron door with her last strength to protect her family from the threat on the other side.

The father who heaves his children out of the window of their burning house, jumps out after them and intercepts the leaden bullets with his body.

We remember all those who fled across fields from the murderers with no haven.

We remember the courageous people who fought to defend their communities.

The vigilant men and women of the civilian emergency squads who faced the enemy with their meager weapons and sacrificed themselves.

The women and men, soldiers on the guard posts who fought bravely, few against many, and fell on the battlefield.

The rescue forces, the secret service, the police and the Israeli Defense Forces who rushed from all over the country to help their besieged brothers and sisters and fell in the field of slaughter.

We remember the victims of terror from the towns and communities of the western Negev and the Bedouin villages, year after year, to this very day.

The people along the borderline, the civilian, the soldier, the foreigner, the resident who marked our border with their own bodies.

May the people of Israel cherish them in their memory; let them mourn the splendor of youth, the altruism of valor, the dedication of will, and the dignity of self-sacrifice which came to an end on the battlefield. May the victims of the Black Shabbat be sealed forever within the hearts of all Israel, in this generation and forevermore.

We embrace the living, the survivors of this brutal inferno.

We embrace the women and men abductees held captive in the cellars of Gaza and the missing ones, whose fate is still unknown.

We embrace the elderly woman and the soldier, the child and young woman, the members of a family held captive together, the mother without her children and the infant without its parents.

Behold, their eyes cast around and about, so let us not rest until they return home.

We hold close to our hearts the girls and boys who grew up in the shadow of a seething volcano and caught in the eruption of its horrifying fire.

We hold close to those who were physically and mentally injured.

Those who fear for the safety of their abducted or missing loved ones.

The orphans, widows and widowers and all the bereaved.

Those who escaped the sword, thousands of people from Israeli communities, who were forced to flee from their homes, without knowing when they will be able to return.

We shall not be silent, we shall not find comfort and our mourning shall not be ceased, until Israel returns and redeems its plundered land and lives safely and peacefully in this generation and forevermore.





CHAPTER 3

Further Suggested Material

I. Testimonies from October 7

From the testimony of Erez Cohen, a news photographer at the Israel Public Broadcasting Corporation.

Rinat Even was a social worker who helped his wife and son, a child with special needs in the last year, like dozens of other families.

A brave friendship was formed between Rinat and Erez, and that Saturday Erez corresponded throughout the hours of the attack with Rinat who was staying at her home in Kibbutz Be'eri with her husband Chen and their four children:

***6:30 AM:** My phone is vibrating non-stop. I slowly wake up and realize that something odd is happening.
While receiving alerts about barrages in Kibbutz Be'eri, I immediately texted my beloved friend Rinat.
She tells me she is safe and has immediately entered the safe room with her partner and four sons.
"What is happening?!?!" she asks on WhatsApp.
I answer that it may be another beginning of fire exchange with Hamas. I look at my WhatsApp again. She tells me that terrorists are near her house, and she hears them speaking in Arabic from the other side of her door. Her shock and horror give me chills, but I still believe that our army will arrive in a matter of minutes, and this will be over soon enough. I am deeply optimistic.
I look at my WhatsApp again, waiting for good news from Rinat. She replies that no one has come to their rescue, and the terrorists continue to shoot towards them and try to enter the shelter.
"They are burning our house!" Rinat writes. I'm struck with fright. I write Rinat, once again, hoping she would answer with "We are okay."
She texts me that they are burning her house down and that they are suffocating from smoke in their safe room.
Later she wrote: "We ran out of the safe room, we couldn't breathe, we were suffocating."
I'm reassuring her while I lie to her and myself; "They'll be right there, I'm positive."*

14:46 PM: *Rinat sends me a selfie of her hiding behind the bushes beside her burning house.*

Her kids are sitting beside her.

She is looking at me through the camera.

She has a dead look on her face, with a hint of horror and despair staring straight at me.

“Unit 669 is here!” Rinat texts me.

I feel like she is about to collapse. She can finally let her guard down.

For a moment, I felt joy. I text her back, wishing for more good news.

I see on WhatsApp she received the message.

I am calm now but still continue to stare at my phone.

15:00 – *I text her: “Give me a sign that everything is ok.”*

15:24 – *I text her: “Answer me please.”*

15:32 – *I text her: “I hope someone came to rescue you.”*

But Rinat didn’t answer.

On the Saturday of Shiva in October, hundreds of families were in the situation of Rinat and her family members. Over 800 citizens and families were murdered and slaughtered during those difficult hours. Rinat, her husband and their four children hid for over three hours in the bushes outside their house. Realizing that these might be their last moments of life, they sent the pictures of their hands together. They were noticed by a terrorist. Rinat and her husband who realized that he was on his way to them, laid down on their children so that each of them protected two children with their body. The terrorist shot at them with the aim of killing them all.

From a happy family of six, two little children were left broken.

Their mother Rinat, their father Chen and their two older brothers, Alon 16 years old and Ido 14 years old were murdered.



vimeo.com/911548349

From the testimony of Na'ama Gal, who on that Shabbat came to celebrate with her friends Rom, Inbar, Eden, Elikin at the Nova party. When the rockets started that morning, the celebrants were asked to disperse in their cars to protected places.

Na'ama and her friends were also on their way to the car when they realized it was more than a missile attack.

As we were about to get out of the car and start running, we saw an endless stream of terrorists enter the area by foot. They had all sorts of weapons and we understood that it was time to run and pray a lot.

I understood at that point that it would be a miracle if anyone survived.

After about 15 minutes of running while being shot at, someone pushed me into a garbage container.

We hid there, me and probably ten other people, for about three hours.

Around us we heard shots being fired and terrorists shouting "Allahu Akbar".

We prayed only for the chaos to be over.

A lot of people were injured, there were screams everywhere, bullets whistling, cars exploding, and many Gazan terrorists with weapons prancing, celebrating and shooting.

We had only come to celebrate at the "Nova".

After about three hours of hiding in the garbage container in the sun, all sweaty and covered in our own urine, I heard a terrorist very close by.

I asked one of the girls that laid there to be quiet so he wouldn't come to kill us.

She told me she had to change position and move.

The plastic that was piled on the garbage beneath us made a sound. In a fraction of a second the terrorist was inside the container, shot at all of us and yelled at the top of his lungs "Allahu Akbar!"

Two beautiful, good guys were shot in the head and fell down right in front of us. The rest of the girls were shot all over their bodies, and I was shot in both of my upper thighs and my shoulder.

I called my mom to tell her that I loved her, but I would not make it this time.

I was surrounded by screams, sweat, blood, garbage and body parts that loose all meaning when you are this empty, not moving.

That's when the race against time began, and a group of angels took care of me, bringing me back from death to life.

Over 3,000 young men and women celebrated at the Nova party that Saturday.

Hundreds were brutally murdered, sometimes after prolonged abuse.

Na'ama miraculously survived, along with two of her friends. One of her best friends Elikin Nazarov was murdered, and her best friend Inbar Hayman has been kidnapped in Gaza and was reportedly murdered in Hamas captivity.



vimeo.com/911549047

From the testimony of Tali Chadad, 48 years old from the city of Ofakim, a mother of six children. She was at home with her family members that Saturday, when they started hearing gunshots outside the house and saw the terrorists right outside the windows, shooting passers-by in the street.

We heard the shots, they got louder and I told my son Itamar, who is an officer in the IDF, go fight for our life, that's what you prepared for. Run fast, run!

I came home, put on sneakers and ran after my son.

The terrorists shot everywhere, the shooting was from all directions, and they made their way towards the block of buildings where I was.

I understood from the screams that there were many injured and dead in the street, and ambulances could not arrive. Then I decided to help them.

I ran, crossing the entire line of fire towards my car. I immediately drove to the fire ground.

I asked where are the wounded? They took out the first one – and I found out it was my son Itamar – he was shot in the stomach and leg.

I looked at him in the eyes, I told him that I was taking him and other injured people to the ambulance station and that I couldn't stay because I had to continue to rescue more injured people. He is a smart boy, he understood, looked at me and said, 'Okay, mom'.

I put him in the ambulance and told them to send him to the hospital quickly.

I didn't hesitate for a moment and went to bring more injured people while driving at 120 km/h in a crazy way.

I was alone in a city with terrorists everywhere. I rushed towards the square and collected from there another group of wounded. I was constantly under fire, there was no moment of rest.

In every block of buildings there were gunshots and smoke bombs, and also shouts of "Allahu Akbar".

I also saw dead people.

I don't know how to explain my behavior.

I have four fighting sons. The spirit in the house is the spirit of warriors.

I always told Itamar when he left for the army:

"Itamar, you should know, if there are any problems wherever you are, I'll go in after you!"

I never imagined I would have to do it so close to home.

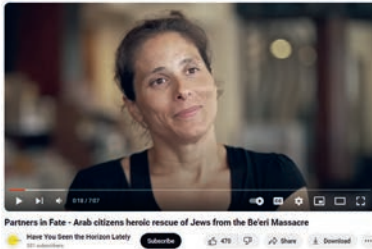
Tali is an example of the bravery shown by hundreds of citizens that Shabbat. People who risked their lives for the rescue and protection of others – from the moral imperative “and you shall not stand on your neighbor's blood” many of them were killed and murdered, but thanks to them many others live.

Tali rescued 11 wounded, all of whom are alive thanks to her.



vimeo.com/911549559

Alongside numerous accounts of bravery from soldiers and citizens, characterized by self-sacrifice, also courageous people from the Bedouin community took action to confront Hamas terrorists, at great personal risk, using whatever means available. Such is the example of Amer Abu Sabila, the 25-year-old man from Sderot (see p. 36 in this toolkit), as well as other people from the Negev Desert who selflessly endangered themselves to rescue fellow lives.



“Partners in Fate – Arab Citizens Heroic Rescue of Jews from the Be’eri Massacre”



[www.youtube.com/
watch?v=CrXtTYm
NB8&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrXtTYmNB8&t=1s)

Further testimonies from October 7:

Seven10stories



The channel Seven10stories provides firsthand accounts of people affected by the tragedy of October 7, 2023. Established by RUNI (Reichman University) communication students.



www.instagram.com/seven10stories/

October 7 Survivor Stories



October7.org was founded for the sole purpose of confronting the entire world with accounts from survivors of the massacres perpetrated by Hamas on October 7, 2023. The project collects written eyewitness accounts from survivors, and with their approval translates them into a range of languages, for worldwide exposure.



www.october7.org/

WarTime Voices



WarTime Voices is a podcast with real voices of real people who were injured, suffered or lost a loved one on the deadly attacks on Israel on October 7, 2023, on “Swords of Iron” war.

open.spotify.com/show/5SIIIV7IxQkQfKH8si3SwnF

Nova Project



Testimonies from youngsters who survived the massacre on the Nova Music Festival. Nova Project aims to provide a place for recovery to survivors of the Nova Festival from their experiences on the one hand, and initial trauma therapy combined with tools to reduce the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder on the other.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_S57k1GmCww

Testimonies from people who were released from Hamas captivity:



Testimony of Adina Moshe, hostage released from Hamas captivity after 49 days in Gaza

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp7ik4IaBdQ>

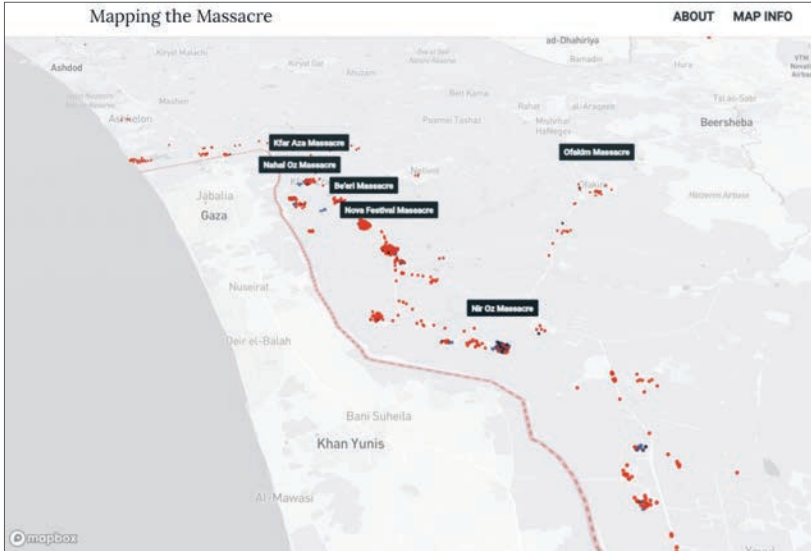


Testimony of Yaffa Adar, hostage released from Hamas captivity after 49 days in Gaza

twitter.com/lahavharkov/status/1749880873820844458?s=46&t=w-wtc14CT-zGJMroucTrm2g

II. Mapping October 7

October 7 Geo-visualization Project



The October 7 geo-visualization project strives to provide a comprehensive representation of the atrocities committed by Hamas on that day. This interactive map serves as a reflection and an educational tool, promoting awareness of the gravity of the horrors.



<https://oct7map.com/>



Black Shabbat. Informative video of The Kibbutz Movement about the effects of October 7 in the Kibbutzim, in the example of Kibbutz Nir Oz.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEp-JcVwKU80>

III. Artistic Production after October 7

Documentary Film “We Will Dance Again”



A one-hour documentary film comprising first-hand video and audio footage from the Nova music festival massacre on October 7.

www.yesstudios.tv/ourcontent/documentaries/nova

Design Duty



A team of Wix designers and writers expressing their emotions and showing solidarity with Israel through art and visuals.

The project invites designers from around the world to share their art and present it at the platform.

www.design-duty.com

Wrapping Memory



Wrapping Memory is an initiative by the Department of Visual Communication at Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design Jerusalem. This project aims to capture and

commemorate the beauty of the region of the Gaza Envelope as it was before the tragic morning on October 7 and is dedicated to raising money for the people who were harmed that day.

wrappingmemory.bezalel.ac.il/en



Appendix with a selection of artistic pictures created after October 7:
kurzelinks.de/appendix-artisticpictures-october7



Music and poetry after October 7

This is a collection of Israeli songs and poems that regained significance again after October 7 or were specifically created to commemorate those events. The songs and poems can be used both for commemoration purposes and for one of the educational activities during a German-Israeli youth exchange program. You can find the songs' lyrics and the poems' texts in English in the toolkit appendix.

Songs

Lo Levad (Not Alone) – Jane Bordeaux
Shibolim (Sheaves) – Adar Gold
Etzlenu Bagan (In Our Kindergarden) – Shai Li Atari
Tamid Yechaku Lecha (Will Always Wait for You) – Lea Shabat
Lir'ot Et Haor (To See the Light) – Efrat Gosh
Anachnu (Us) – Guy Mazig
Habaita (Home) – Homeland Concert
Hachitah Tzomachat Shuv (The Wheat is Growing Again) – Chava Alberstein
Lu Yehi (All We Pray For) – Chava Alberstein
Noam's Song 2 – Maor Ashkenazi & Noam Cohen



Appendix with a selection of lyrics and YouTube links:
kurzelinks.de/appendix-lyrics-october7



Poems

October – Adi Keissar
Illusion – Michael Zats
A Word is Needed – Vered Trumer
Home Front Command's New Regulations for Small Talk – Lital Kaplan
Kaddish – Asaf Gur
Mom Is Always Right – Itay Lev
Mothers – Osnat Eldar



Appendix with a selection of poems:
kurzelinks.de/appendix-poems-october7



This article documents “popular songs of rage and resilience that became post-October 7 soundtrack”

“Amid Thrum of War, Popular Songs of Rage and Resilience Become Post-oct. 7 Soundtrack. As the Israel-Hamas war rages, hit tracks tune into the psyche of Israeli society grappling with a tragic and challenging time” (by Gavriel Fiske, in: The Times of Israel, 20 February 2024)

www.timesofisrael.com/amid-thrum-of-war-popular-songs-of-rage-and-resilience-become-post-oct-7-soundtrack/

IV. The Power of Social Media

After the events of October 7, certain social media channels emerged prominently. Jewish, Israeli, and other individuals worldwide have utilized their social media platforms to express solidarity with Israel and the victims of October 7. Simultaneously, they aim to raise awareness among their followers about the growing issue of antisemitism and the dissemination of distorted narratives regarding the Middle-East conflict.

Noa Tishby



Noa Tishby, Israeli actress, author and activist. Since October 7 she dedicated her career to defend the Jewish people and the State of Israel around the world. www.instagram.com/noatishby/?hl=en

Ask Dani



Dani Buller, Israeli teacher of mathematics who started his own tik-tok channel during the corona pandemic, giving simple answers to complex scientific questions. Since October 7 he has been creating content on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, presenting complex situations in a simplified language, accessible to everyone. www.instagram.com/ask_dani

Black Jewish Magic



Tashager Araro, Israeli-Ethiopian activist. She describes herself as an influencer, feminist, supporter of black lives and proud Zionist. Since October 7 she has been dedicating her social media work to debunking myths and fake news about Israel while raising awareness about the diversity and multicultural aspects of her country. www.instagram.com/blackjewishmagic/

Caroline D'Amore



Caroline D'Amore, American entrepreneur known for her brand of Pizza sauce and a large number of followers on Instagram. Since October 7 she has been actively raising awareness about the ongoing events between Israel and Gaza and using her platform to combat antisemitism. www.instagram.com/carolinedamore

MuhammadZoabi98



Muhammad Zoabi, 17-year-old Israeli-Palestinian student, writer and speaker. Since October 7 he creates informative content around the war between Israel and Hamas, raising awareness about the complexity of the Middle East conflict and advocating for the release of the hostages.

www.instagram.com/muhammadzoabi98

Arabs Ask



Rawan Gabrielle Osman, a Syrian-Lebanese/German content creator advocating normalization between Arab countries and Israel. She is the founder of the association Post7October whose mission is to bring to the Arab World the missing Israeli version of events.

www.instagram.com/arabs_ask/

V. WE ARE CONNECTED. German-Israeli Partnerships in Action

Since October 7, there has been ongoing and frequent communication between youth exchange partners from Germany and Israel. Demonstrations of solidarity, ranging from small gestures to larger events and awareness-raising projects for those affected in Israel, serve as significant illustrations of the strong bonds and partnerships between the two countries.



For examples and materials from German-Israeli partnerships visit the website we-are-connected.org. The initiative **WE ARE CONNECTED. German-Israeli Youth Exchange in Support for Israel** hosts and documents notable projects that have arisen directly in response to events since October 7.

WE ARE CONNECTED.

German-Israeli Youth Exchange in Support for Israel

The initiative WE ARE CONNECTED invites German partner organizations and young people from youth exchanges, school exchanges and volunteer services to be in contact with their Israeli partner organizations and friends. It encourages them to support projects in Israel that support those affected on the ground. The initiative invites to support mentally and through creating ideas for donations. It invites partners to stay in close touch with each other and to make their close ties with people in Israel tangible and visible.

WE ARE CONNECTED.*

“This is the name we have given to our joint initiative for youth contacts between Germany and Israel in these difficult weeks.

We are connected. That is a statement. An assurance. A commitment. An affirmation of the deep and diverse connections between young people and people of all generations from Germany and Israel.

We are connected, because Jewish life has been an integral part of society in this country over the centuries, and it still is in present-day Germany.

We are connected because all of us in Germany and Israel are part of the terrible history in which the people of National Socialist Germany persecuted and murdered Jews from all over Europe. We are connected when we hear in these weeks how much the survivors of that persecution are affected and shaken, retraumatized by the current attacks on Israel.

We are connected in the many daily issues and challenges of our everyday lives in normal times – in the diversity of identities, interests and opinions of young people in our democratic societies. We are connected in our shared interests in culture, sport, school and extracurricular education. We are united in discourses and activities for sustainability and environmental protection.

And in these weeks, we are connected once again. Because the attacks on Israel are not just Islamist attacks on Israel’s democratic and open society. These attacks have also affected us altogether in the field of exchange:

There is Yotam Ben Bassat, 24 years old. He was a participant in an exchange program of the 50-year-old exchange partnership between Emek Hefer and Siegen-Wittgenstein. Yotam died as a soldier on October 7 while trying to defend his country against the terrorists.

And there is Ilan Moshe Yaakov, 29 years old. He was the director of the Beit Dani Youth Center in Tel Aviv and a group leader in the long-standing exchange partnership between Tel Aviv and Frankfurt. On October 7, he was murdered as one of the participants of the Nova Festival.

And then there are the exchange groups that visited Israel on October 7 just as usual – also in the south of the country, such as a group from Karlsruhe in the Sha’ar HaNegev region and a group from Pankow visiting Ashkelon.

In the first weeks after October 7, the approach was cautious: How can we talk about what happened? What can we say or ask? Do our tears have a place in the distance, even though we are far away and safe? What can we do?

The **WE ARE CONNECTED.** initiative encourages German partner organizations and young people from youth exchanges, school exchanges and volunteer services to be in contact with Israeli partners and friends NOW and to show visible signs of support and connectedness. The initiative invites German partner organizations to provide idealistic support and also to come up with concrete help by developing donation ideas. In this situation, in which so many people in Israel are volunteering to help, the Israeli youth movements are a central force among the helpers: They support families affected by flight and evacuation, organize lessons and leisure activities for evacuated children and young people and spend time with elderly, retraumatized people.

Let’s set an example of connectedness!

Our support is needed NOW.”

**Excerpt from the speech by Christine Mähler, Director of ConAct, at the launch event of the initiative WE ARE CONNECTED. in Berlin in December 2023.*



vimeo.com/911557049



WE ARE CONNECTED.
German-Israeli Youth Exchange
in Support for Israel

SPECIAL THANKS ...

... to the participants of the German-Israeli working group for their contribution to the preparation of the toolkit “Education and Encounter after October 7”

Guy Band – The Lower Saxony Memorials Foundation

Tammy Bar-Shay – Videographer

Maimon Ben Hamo – Community Centers of Beit Shemesh Municipality

Hanni Efrimov – Educator and Consultant for Commemoration & Encounter

Barbara Friedrich – Regional Council Siegen-Wittgenstein

Esther Isler – Israeli Federation of Community Centers

Sabine Klein – Bavarian Youth Council

Tlalit Kitzoni – Expert on Holocaust Education

Elia Morgulev – Head of Physical Education Department at Kaye Academic College of Education

Bettina Pinzl – Youth Worker and Exchange of Berlin-Mitte

Tyll Reinisch – Sports Youth Nordfriesland

Torsten Rutinowski – Municipality of the City of Bochum

Susanne Schwarzenberg-Salmen – Educational Exchange Service for Schools

Efrat Simenhaus-Shafran – Regional Council Emek Hefer

Roy Shaul – The Israeli Scouts

George Stevens – Hanoar Haoved Vehalomed (The Working and Studying Youth)





... to the team of the inviting organizations

Christine Mähler – ConAct – Coordination Center German-Israeli Youth Exchange

Ariella Gill – Israel Youth Exchange Authority

Tal Madar – Council of Youth Movements in Israel

Shlomit Ronen-Livne – Council of Youth Movements in Israel

Sabine Troitzsch – ConAct – Coordination Center German-Israeli Youth Exchange

Ilira Aliai – ConAct – Coordination Center German-Israeli Youth Exchange

About Us

About the history and origin of German-Israeli Youth Contacts

German-Israeli youth exchanges have been taking place for more than 60 years. A dense network of personal connections and institutional contacts supports the diverse relationships between youth organizations, educational institutions and public bodies in Israel and Germany – contacts that initially grew in the western German states and have expanded to the eastern German states since 1990.

During his visit to Israel in 2000, the then Federal President Johannes Rau encouraged the active support and sustainable expansion of German-Israeli youth contacts. To this end, the education ministers of both countries agreed to set up coordination offices for German-Israeli youth exchanges in Germany and Israel.

Further information can be found at: www.exchange-visions.de

About the publishing organizations

The Israel Youth Exchange Authority ...

... was established on the basis of a government resolution and is subordinate to the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Israeli Ministry of Education. The Authority is a nationwide umbrella organization that includes all Israeli organizations involved in youth exchange and international relations. The Authority is responsible for the exchange of information and coordination between all relevant bodies. Further information can be found at: www.facebook.com/youthexil/

ConAct – Acting together ...

... is an institution of the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth with the support of the states of Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. ConAct works under the auspices of the Protestant Academy of Saxony-Anhalt in Lutherstadt Wittenberg and has its office in the Old Town Hall on the market square at the invitation of the town. The Coordination Center for German-Israeli Youth Exchange operates nationwide. Further information can be found at: www.conact-org.de/

The Council of Youth Movements in Israel ...

... is the umbrella organization of the youth movements in Israel. It serves as a roundtable and a meeting place for the heads of the youth movements, hailing from all across the political spectrum, to address current educational issues and the involvement of youth in social processes and public activity, as

well as present-day problems that Israeli society is facing. The Council maintains relations with corresponding youth movement councils and conducts youth delegation exchanges between them. Further information can be found at: eng.tni.org.il/

About the tasks of ConAct and the Israel Youth Exchange Authority

We focus on ...

- ... the provision of information and networking opportunities relating to German-Israeli youth contacts.
- ... advising German-Israeli project partnerships on the design and implementation of joint youth and professionals exchange programs.
- ... the creation of educational handouts for the preparation and practical implementation of German-Israeli youth encounters.
- ... the elaboration of central questions for the further development of German-Israeli encounters – across generations and in awareness of the specific German-Israeli relations.
- ... the conception of seminars for the exchange of experiences and conferences for further training for youth group leaders and multipliers in German-Israeli exchange.
- ... the development of new ideas and pilot projects in German-Israeli youth exchange on the way to establishing a German-Israeli Youth Office.

Our service – we are here for your questions!

- ⚡ We help with the planning and organization of German-Israeli exchange programs.
- ⚡ We provide information on the funding of German-Israeli youth encounters with funds from the German Federal Youth Ministry and administer the “Special Funds Germany-Israel” of the German Federal Children and Youth Plan. Around 400 exchange programs are funded from these funds each year.
- ⚡ We advise on the search for additional financing options for exchange programs.
- ⚡ We arrange contacts between partners in youth and professional exchanges in Germany and Israel to establish new partnerships.
- ⚡ We network in the field of youth exchange and volunteer services between Germany and Israel.
- ⚡ We see ourselves as service centers and information hubs for youth contacts between Germany and Israel.
- ⚡ We look forward to receiving specific suggestions, important information and contact with you!



ENTFÜHRT
VOM GANZ FÜR DIE WELT
EMMA & YUKI CURSO, 3 JAHRE ALT
Diese Mädchen sind mit der Schwärmerin nach Österreich entführt worden.

ENTFÜHRT
KIDNAPPED
YUKI CURSO, 10 JAHRE ALT

ENTFÜHRT
KIDNAPPED

unicef
Für jedes Kind?

A WOMAN GAVE BIRTH
IN CAPTIVITY

KIDNAPPED
ENTFÜHRT

KIDNAPPED
ENTFÜHRT

ENTFÜHRT
KIDNAPPED



How can we relate to the events of October 7 in Israel?

How can we get some insight into what exactly happened to the people in the south of Israel who were attacked on that day?

How can we shape our awareness regarding the impact of October 7 on life and discourses in Israel, but also in Germany?

The toolkit “Education and Encounter after October 7” provides guidance and educational resources for facilitators of German-Israeli Youth Exchange programs. It aims to help them effectively address the events of October 7 within an educational context when working with young people. In addition to finding suitable language to talk and learn about these events, the toolkit encourages facilitators from both countries to engage in bilateral discussions on these topics.

The provided material sheds light on the impact of the events on Israeli society and raises awareness of the increasing antisemitism in Germany and worldwide. It emphasizes the importance of remembering and honoring those affected by the attacks of October 7. Last, the toolkit highlights the continuous effort to strengthen bonds among young people from Germany and Israel amid these challenging times.



www.conact-org.de/toolkit-october-7



WE ARE CONNECTED.
German-Israeli **Youth** Exchange
in Support for Israel

Funded by:



Federal Ministry for
Family Affairs, Senior Citizens,
Women and Youth